

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Interview with Cuban
general Enrique Carreras
International Socialist Review — PAGES 5-12

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Phone strikers: 'Puerto Rico is not for sale!'

Thousands of workers, students join protests

BY HILDA CUZCO

The strike by 6,400 telephone workers in Puerto Rico against the sale of the state-owned Puerto Rico Telephone Company (PRTC) has become a lightning rod for working-class resistance and nationalist sentiment in this Caribbean nation, the largest U.S. colony. De-

Next week's issue will feature reporting from Puerto Rico by 'Perspectiva Mundial' editor Martín Koppel and Young Socialists leader Verónica Poses

spite brutal police assaults, the unionists have been joined on the picket lines and in the streets by thousands of working people and students.

Meanwhile, the colonial regime of Gov. Pedro Roselló has vowed to go ahead with the sale of the company to a private consortium, headed by U.S. telecommunications giant GTE, as part of its privatization program. The government has already sold enterprises such as hotels and a shipping company, has sought private investment in the state-owned energy industry, and is planning to sell off hospitals and prisons.

The sale of the PRTC, which workers expect will lead to layoffs, attacks on their working conditions, and rate hikes, has sparked widespread opposition in the work-



Telephone workers confront cops on picket line in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, the first day of strike.

ing class and middle class in Puerto Rico. Many are outraged that the profitable phone company is being sold for a bargain price — \$1.87 billion, of which only \$375 million is in cash and the rest from a commercial loan.

GTE, the third-largest telephone company in the United States, is buying a 51 percent stake in the company. Banco Popular of Puerto Rico and other local capitalist investors will buy another 5 percent, with 44 per-

cent remaining in the hands of the government.

The Independent Telephone Workers Union (UIET), with 4,400 members, and the 2,000-strong Independent Brotherhood of Telephone Workers (HIETEL), June 18 launched the strike after the colonial Senate voted to approve the sale. The Puerto Rico House of Representatives followed suit

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GM plants across U.S. close as strikers stay firm

BY JEAN LUC DUVAL
AND WILLIE REID

FLINT, Michigan — On June 17 at 11:00 a.m., hundreds of members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 659, their families, and supporters marched from the union hall to the picket lines at the General Motors (GM) Metal Fabrication plant here. They joined hundreds of other unionists already there from Kalamazoo, Lansing, Pontiac, and Detroit, Michigan; Dayton, Ohio; and other cities in the Midwest.

Spirited chants of "UAW! UAW! UAW!" and choruses from "Solidarity Forever" mixed with horns blasting from passing cars and trucks, showing support for the 3,400 unionists on strike since June 5.

A similar rally took place at the Delphi East picket lines a little later that day. UAW members in Local 651 walked out of that plant en masse June 11, swelling the ranks of auto workers on strike against GM in Flint to 9,200.

As the strikes approached three weeks, almost all of the North American assembly operations of the world's largest auto maker ground to a halt. Some 122,400 GM workers are laid off in 24 of its 29 assembly plants in United States, Canada, and Mexico. In addition, workers at some 100 plants that supply parts for GM assembly factories have also been affected.

Analysts estimate that the cost to GM is about \$75 million per day in lost production. GM's lost production through June is estimated at about 250,000 vehicles, or \$1.1 billion after taxes, assuming the strike is not

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War against Kosova Albanians heats up, as Washington moves to intervene

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Yugoslav government headed by Slobodan Milosevic has intensified its war against Albanians in Kosova who are fighting for self-determination, while Washington and other imperialist powers discuss preparations for a military assault on the

Balkan republic.

The Kosova Information Center reported that clashes have stepped up between the Serbian chauvinist forces of the Yugoslav Army and Albanian fighters in villages of the Decan. The Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) has set up road blocks on main roads

in the province, which has led to frequent battles.

The Serbian military has also continued its assaults on the villages of Recak and Belince, using tanks and heavy cannons June 24. Electricity to entire regions of Kosova have been cut off, including most of the capital city Pristina.

The UCK is a guerrilla group that is waging an armed struggle for the independence of Kosova, where 90 percent of the population is Albanian. The support for independence has become overwhelming in face of the recent military assaults on the region, which was an autonomous area within the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia until the Milosevic government revoked that status in 1989. As the bureaucratic caste that had ruled Yugoslavia splintered, Pristina was the city where Milosevic launched his nationalist tirades to justify grabbing territory and resources for the layer of the bureaucracy loyal to him. Prejudices against ethnic Albanians have been widely promoted by the regime since then.

The UCK released a statement June 20 calling for a "general mobilization" and declared it was prepared for a "decisive confrontation" with Serbian forces. In the state-

Continued on Page 14

Stakes in Philadelphia transit strike rise

BY PETE SEIDMAN

PHILADELPHIA — The stakes in the strike by 5,300 members of Transport Workers Union Local 234 (TWU) here were ratcheted up another notch when board members of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) threatened to permanently close the city transit division serving some 435,000 people here unless the union agreed to accept its terms. "We are concerned with the authority's very existence," said board member James Schwartzman at a June 19 news conference. "If we don't make these changes, there will be no system in the future.... Not just for two or three weeks — it will be permanent."

SEPTA forced the city bus, trolley, and subway workers out on strike June 1 after refusing to retreat from its "final offer," which demanded an expansion of two-tier wages, an unlimited "management-rights" clause including the right to use part-time and volunteer workers, and the termination

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N.Y. activists build July 25 actions

BRIAN TAYLOR

NEW YORK — "Puerto Rico no se vende" — Puerto Rico is not for sale — read a large banner at a picket of 100 people here June 24 in solidarity with striking telephone workers in Puerto Rico. The action was called by Comité Puerto Rico '98, and was one of a series of events building the July 25 demonstration for Puerto Rican independence at the United Nations.

"The telephone company has become a symbol of national identity," said Jerry Maldonado, a 24-year-old activist in the group Muévete who was holding the banner. "I think that's why it has become

such a passionate issue."

At least a half dozen workers and others passing by joined the protest.

That evening about 15 people attended a Comité planning meeting for the UN action, where activists discussed adding a fact sheet about the telephone workers strike to the back of the flyer for the July 25 march. On June 20, close to 30 people gathered for an evening of political and cultural presentations at the Julia de Burgos center here to build for the July 25 national demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Ana López of the National Commit-

Continued on Page 14

Conflict over Cyprus flares

Tensions between the governments of Greece and Turkey over Cyprus have flared again. After Athens deployed four F-16 fighter planes and two C-130 transport planes to southern Cyprus June 16, the Turkish regime responded by sending two submarines, a destroyer, and a frigate to take part in a "naval exercise" in northern Cyprus. Greek Cypriot defense minister Yiannakis Omirou asserted that the Greek planes arrived as part of a joint defense agreement between the two governments.

Cyprus, the third-largest island in the Mediterranean, has been a point of conflict between Greek imperialism and Turkey's capitalist rulers for decades. In 1960 Cyprus won independence from the United Kingdom, but remained dominated by British imperialism, which maintains two military bases there today and made Ankara and Athens "guarantors" of the new state. In 1974 the military regime in Greece organized a coup to overthrow the government in Cyprus and annex it. Ankara waged a counter-invasion, ostensibly to protect the Turkish-Cypriot minority, and in 1983 declared the northern part it occupies independent.

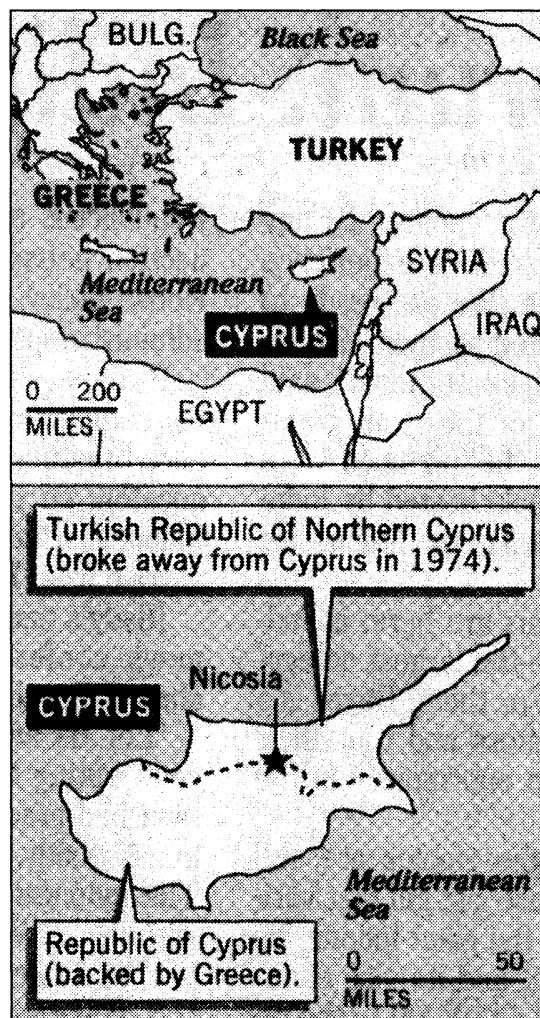
Dock workers strike in Greece

Dock workers at Piraeus and Thessaloniki, Greece's two largest commercial ports, began a six-day strike June 18 against government plans to auction off a 49 percent stake of the state-owned port operation on the Athens stock market. Unionists say the so-called restructuring will lead to layoffs.

That same day, postal workers staged a 24-hour strike in opposition to Athens's plan to "reform" that service, which it says operates at a loss. The Greek government is trying to push through these austerity measures under the banner of reducing its budget deficit below 3 percent of the Gross Domestic Product — a requirement for joining the European common currency.

Polish workers block rail traffic

Rail engine drivers in Poland went on strike June 17, affecting a third of passenger and freight traffic. The strikers, who are not backed by the pro-government Solidarity union, are demanding a 15 percent wage



increase and the tripling of government funding for the industry. The Polish government has threatened to sue the rail workers for the losses they incurred.

Teachers in Israel strike

Thousands of teachers in Israel — from kindergarten to high school — put down their chalk June 7 in a one-day strike to protest the Israeli government's pension "reforms." Under the teachers' current "non-contributory" pension plan, nothing is charged over and above the years of labor put in. Tel Aviv's "reforms" would force teachers to pay more for pensions out of their wages. Avraham Shabat, secretary-general

of the teachers union, warned that the next school year will be delayed if the government maintains its stance. Education Ministry director general Ben Zion Dell said the strikers were "hurting the image of the teachers that the Education Ministry has been working so hard to nurture."

Dozens of south Korean companies are on the brink

Faced with a devastating currency crisis, the south Korean government has placed 55 companies unable to make payments on bank loans on a "death list." South Korean capitalists carry a domestic debt of \$432 billion in unpaid loans issued to Korean businesses. Companies on the official list are not eligible for loans, leaving little chance for them to survive. But those companies can sell off their assets or seek a merger. The defaults make it difficult for the banks to pay on the \$150 billion debt owed to foreign bankers, causing foreign capitalists to pull investments out of the country.

This situation triggered a currency crisis there in December, which led the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to come in with a \$58 billion dollar "bail-out" package. The IMF has used the so-called bailout to pressure Seoul to cut government subsidies and shut down debt-ridden companies, allow foreign capitalists to penetrate deeper into its economy and buy up national property, and try to take back gains won by the working class.

Coup attempt in Guinea-Bissau

Heavy fighting is raging in the west African country of Guinea-Bissau as Brig. Ansumane Mane, former chief of the armed forces, clashed with the government there in an attempted coup that was launched June 7. The battle has drawn in the Senegalese government, which has joined forces with the regime in Guinea-Bissau, declaring that separatist rebels in Senegal have joined forces with Mane.

Mane's forces tried to take the capital city, Bissau, but government troops have surrounded a garrison occupied by the mutineers just outside that city. Mane was dismissed in January, accused of arming Senegalese rebels. Guinea-Bissau was first claimed as a colony of Portugal in 1886, but it took half a century of "pacification" campaigns for the colonizers to consolidate their control. After decades of resistance and an independence movement in the 1960s, the Guinea-Bissau people threw out the Portuguese rulers in 1974.

Venezuela labor protests heat up

Teachers, doctors, and other health workers took part in a "taking of Caracas" demonstration June 18, marching through the streets of the capital Caracas and other cities demanding, among other things, wage

increases. Public teachers began a 72-hour strike the day before, and doctors and nurses are threatening the same. Labor Minister María Bernardoni pleaded workers to "understand" the economic crisis that has been exacerbated by the drop in oil prices. The price of Venezuelan oil has averaged \$11.17 per barrel this year, down from \$16.32 last year and \$18.39 in 1996. Oil revenues account for 40 percent of the government's budget, 77 percent of foreign-exchange earnings, and 22 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

Carlos Borges, acting president of the Venezuelan Workers Confederation and a leader in the public sector workers' union, warned that "an uncontrollable escalation of conflict that would threaten democratic order" would be set into motion if some wage demands were not met. About 70 percent of 23 million Venezuelans live in poverty according to government figures, and unemployment is at 13 percent.

More cops, more brutality

The U.S. Justice department reported June 7 that the number of full-time state and local cops assigned to patrol the streets increased by more than 19 percent between 1992 and 1996. Some 663,535 full-time cops with arrest powers were in active duty in 1996, 64 percent of whom were assigned to street patrols, up from 59 percent in 1993. According to the Center for Constitutional Rights, there are no national figures available on police brutality, but a recent report issued by Amnesty International focusing on New York City paints a picture. From 1992 to 1996 at least 80 people in New York were killed by cops under "questionable" circumstances.

The New York City government was forced to pay \$98 million dollars in settlements for police abuse complaints in that period. The majority of the thousands of complaints filed — which are up more than 60 percent since 1992 — are from Blacks. According to a 1996 Amnesty International report, "it is rare for NYPD officers to be criminally prosecuted for on-duty excessive force and even rarer for convictions to be obtained."

Real threat of 'Megan's Law'

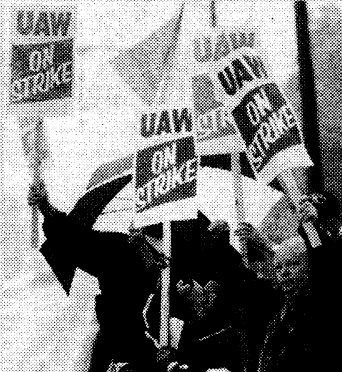
Two weeks after police circulated fliers with the photo and address of a man in Linden, New Jersey, who had been paroled after 16 years in prison on rape charges, five shots were fired into his residence June 16. Neighbors told the press that the man had lived there uneventfully since 1992, until the leaflets were distributed under "Megan's Law." Joan Bazydlo, a fellow tenant whose apartment was actually hit by the bullets, said that after the flyers went around, drivers began passing by issuing threats and sending threatening letters. State officials said they would investigate the shooting, but denied the incident demonstrated the danger of vigilantism under the law.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Support striking auto workers!

United Auto Workers members on strike at General Motors have drawn a line in the sand against attacks by the auto bosses. As part of joining their fight for jobs and better working conditions, the 'Militant' covers this important labor battle, providing a place for strikers to tell the truth about their struggle. Don't miss a single issue!



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The Militant

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Socialists build conference at plant gates

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

PITTSBURGH — As part of building the July 11–12 active workers conference here (see ad below), supporters of the *Militant* sold 28 copies of the paper at eight plant gates and mine portals this past week.

Seventeen of these papers were sold to miners. Ten UMWA miners bought the paper at the entrance to the McElroy mine portal in West Virginia. Many miners stopped their vehicles after taking notice of a large placard that read: "GM Workers on Strike — Read the *Militant*."

"Miners wanted to learn more about the UAW's fight against the GM bosses," said Diana Newberry, organizer of the Socialist Workers Party's work in the coal fields. "One miner who bought the paper gave me a \$5 donation." Another seven papers were sold to miners at three additional mine por-

tals in Western Pennsylvania, including to one Coal Employment Project (CEP) activist who will be attending the June 26–28 CEP conference in Pittsburgh.

Airline workers from US Airways were also interested in finding out more about the GM strike. At a plant gate in front of the maintenance facility, two members of the International Association of Machinists pulled off the road to talk and buy the paper. One airline worker said he was frustrated with the situation at US Airways. "We've been working without a contract for almost three years," he said. "I'm going to make sure this paper gets around inside."

Four copies were sold at LTV Steel in Aliquippa and USX in Clairton. In recent years both of these companies have slashed their work forces. LTV, for example, now employs 400 workers, down from 14,000.

LTV steelworker Dorothy Kolis, the Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in this area, reported that one of her co-workers bought the paper at the plant gate. "He's been trying to get the paper but couldn't find me in the plant. He bought it at the plant gate and told me he read it cover to cover, and really liked the fact that the *Militant* writes about world events."

The petitioning effort to get Kolis on the ballot here had its best week yet, netting 800 signatures. To date almost 2,000 have been collected toward the 3,500 goal. In all, 22 campaign supporters hit the streets, getting the best response in working-class communities. Two new campaigners, both young, joined the petitioning teams. Campaign supporters aim to have the petitioning wrapped up by the July 4 holiday weekend. A campaign celebration is planned for July 4.

Brad Downs, a laid-off UAW member at the GM Parma stamping plant in Cleveland, reported that two *Militant* sales teams sold a total of 46 papers to UAW members at the Mansfield–Ontario GM stamping plant in Ohio. "This is the plant where the dies from the Flint plant were sent," said Downs.

Socialists here are beginning to meet with young people, as well as a few workers, about attending the conference. In these meetings they are stressing the importance of discussing the themes of the two-day meeting.

Special attention to fundraising is needed for scholarships for those who need financial help to attend. The \$95 registration fee includes the costs of four catered meals. The hotel room rate for the conference is \$109 per night, which is not guaranteed after the July 3 reservation deadline.

Active Workers Conference ❖ Pittsburgh, July 11–12

Main Presentations

Sea change in working-class politics

JACK BARNES

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY NATIONAL SECRETARY

- Exhaustion of bosses' ability to demoralize workers and hold off defensive action by the working class
- A crisis of the working-class vanguard is precipitated worldwide
- The growing political convergence of party branch and trade union fraction work
- Facing the party's retreat and retaking the living knowledge and practice of Marxism
- Producing books and pamphlets as a combined responsibility of branches, fractions, volunteers, and the apparatus — The 'turtle' fights back
- Preparing the party's national convention by strengthening our continuity: 60th anniversary of founding of SWP, 70th anniversary of the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press, and 80th anniversary of the communist movement in North America
- From Cuba to the U.S., communist vanguard regardless of size faces challenge of sharply changed situation: lessons from interviews with generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and from the life of Manuel Piñero.

Discuss plans for year-end anniversary convention of the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco

Structuring party branches and union fractions through mass work

A PANEL OF WORKER-BOLSHEVIKS

LESSONS OF COMMUNIST WORK FROM MCDONALD'S TO CASE CORP., FROM FLINT STRIKE TO THE PHILADELPHIA TRANSIT WORKERS WALKOUT, FROM DENMARK TO AUSTRALIA

NORTON SANDLER, PANEL MODERATOR

Member, International Association of Machinists; San Francisco

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

TOM ALTER Member, United Food and Commercial Workers; Des Moines, Iowa

DIANA NEWBERRY Organizer of SWP's work in the coalfields; Pittsburgh

ANNA OLSON Member, Transport Workers Union; Stockholm, Sweden

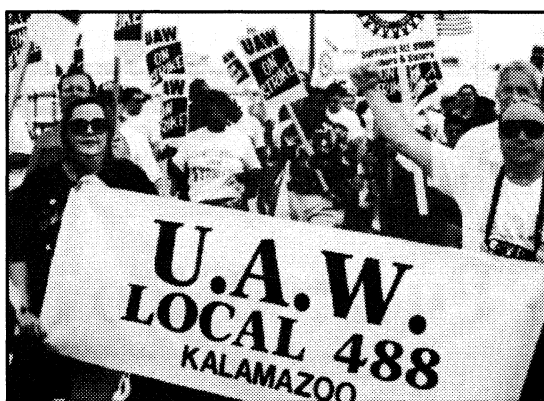
GAETAN WHISTON Member, United Steelworkers of America; Minneapolis

Puerto Rico: New rise of independence struggle as world imperialism weakens

VERÓNICA POSES

YOUNG SOCIALISTS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

- The uniqueness of the SWP's 60-year-long record placing support for Puerto Rican independence at the center of strategy for the coming American socialist revolution
- Cuba's socialist revolution: class litmus test among pro-independence forces
- Imperialist decline opens door to resurgence of national liberation struggles from Ireland to Quebec
- Build the July 25 actions! Independence for Puerto Rico! Free the political prisoners!



March and rally in support of United Auto Workers on strike against General Motors in Flint, Michigan, June 17, 1998.



Demonstration across the United Nations in New York April 4, 1998, demanding freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoners.

CONFERENCE DISPLAYS

**Retaking Marxism:
Organizing branch socialist
summer schools**

**The reorganization of labor in the party
print shop and the international volunteer
brigade digitizing Pathfinder books**

*'The Revolution Betrayed' comes off
presses: the first joint product of
volunteers and the print shop*

*First reduction in the print shop's size and
department structure*

*Floor plan for installation of computer-to-
plate technology and photos of new
equipment*

*Plans for organizing volunteers to prepare
site for installation of new machinery*

**Puerto Rico,
the Socialist Workers Party,
and the fight for independence**

CONFERENCE SITE

Marriott City Center

112 Washington Place, Pittsburgh, PA

FOR INFORMATION CALL:

Cleveland SWP (216) 861-6150 **Pittsburgh SWP** (412) 381-9785

YS National Committee
(773) 772-0551

Schedule

Saturday, July 11

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. | Registration |
| 11:00 – 12:00 p.m. | Welcome reception / Lunch |
| 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. | Talk on Puerto Rico and discussion |
| 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. | Panel discussion (1st session) |
| 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. | Dinner |
| 7:30 – 11:30 p.m. | Talk on Sea Change in Working-Class Politics and discussion |

LAUNCHING OF CAPITAL FUND TO UPGRADE PRINTING EQUIPMENT

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 12:00 – 1:30 a.m. | Party |
|-------------------|-------|

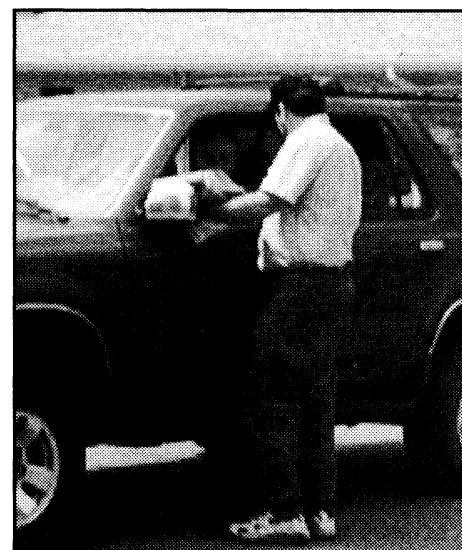
Sunday, July 12

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. | Panel discussion (2nd session) |
| 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. | Summary of conference |

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 4:30 p.m. – | Meeting of the members of the SWP's national trade union fraction steering committees |
|-------------|---|

Monday–Tuesday, July 13–14

Meeting of the SWP's National Committee



Selling the *Militant* at Case Corporation heavy equipment plant in East Moline, Illinois, May 12, 1998.

HOSTS

Pittsburgh Socialist Workers Party,
Cleveland Socialist Workers Party,
Pittsburgh Young Socialists,
Young Socialists National Committee,
SWP National Trade Union
Fraction Steering Committees

Volunteers take new steps to prepare Pathfinder books for print shop

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

OAKLAND, California — The steering committee organizing volunteers around the world to put into electronic format the entire back list of some 350 titles that Pathfinder Press publishes, or is responsible for keeping in print and distributing, held a meeting here June 19-21. The committee made a number of decisions to step up the pace of digitizing books and pamphlets to keep up with titles going out of stock and to take responsibility for putting into electronic format the graphics, photos, and covers of the books — not just the text. The decisions include:

- Broadening immediately the number of volunteers formatting the electronic files of the manuscripts. Formatting is the final stage of preparing the electronic page layouts before the book is sent to Pathfinder's print shop, where printing plates will be produced directly from the digital files through computer-to-plate technology. Using this equipment is part of the reorganization of labor in the publisher's shop, which will allow Pathfinder to meet the demand by fighting workers and youth for revolutionary literature with a smaller and less

complex print shop and at a lower cost for short runs.

Formatting was one of the main tasks where a bottleneck had been created by initially organizing only a small group of volunteers in the Bay Area to carry out this task. Robbie Scherr, a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party in Seattle, is now formatting *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, while Peggy Brundy in Oakland is completing the formatting of *Sexism and Science*, a book by Evelyn Reed. The steering committee set deadlines for delivering the finished electronic files of both of these titles to Pathfinder by June 29, which will make it possible printing them with the new technology prior to the July 11-12 active workers conference in Pittsburgh (see ad on page 3). *The Revolution Betrayed* by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky was completed June 13 — the first joint product of volunteers and the print shop.

- Organizing the 120 plus volunteers who have signed up for the project from around the world so that an average of 10 books and pamphlets per month can be delivered to Pathfinder in finished electronic files for the last six months of this year. This is the level of production needed to keep pace with books going out of stock at the publisher's

current level of sales.

- Recruiting supporters of the communist movement to begin digitizing graphics and photos in books. The pilot project to get this going will be digitizing the graphics of *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* by Nelson Blackstock, due to be delivered in digital form by September 1. The steering committee set a deadline of August 30 for taking responsibility for this part of the production process for all books, a task now being carried out by workers in Pathfinder's print shop.

- Organizing volunteers to digitize the covers of the books put into electronic format, which will often involve some redesigning. The cover of *Cointelpro* will be the first volunteers will produce this way. The same team will also begin recruiting and training supporters of the communist movement to design new covers for Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

More extensive coverage of the June 19-21 meeting will appear in a forthcoming issue. Those who would like to help with any of the tasks outlined above can do so by contacting Ruth Cheney, organizer of the Bay Area steering committee, at rcheney3@compuserve.com

GM strike

Continued from front page

settled this week.

The solidarity expressed daily in Flint is matched by many on layoff. UAW members at American Axle Manufacturing (AAM), where these reporters work, welcomed the layoff. AAM supplies drive line systems to GM. The layoff included 1,800 UAW members at the company's Detroit plants. It's seen for now as a break from the mandatory seven-day work schedule enforced in three out of five AAM Detroit plants, from January 15 through June 15.

Some workers at the GM, Electro-Motive Division (EMD) plant in Chicago are following events in Flint closely, as well. "I support the brothers and sisters," said Joe Thompson, who has worked there for more than 28 years. "I was out on strike in 1970 and I know what it is all about."

Both Flint strikes protest GM's violation of the local agreements, which stipulate investing more money on upgrading and training in these plants to stem jobs lost through restructuring and outsourcing. Also at stake are unresolved health and safety issues and the company's demand for "efficiency" through speedup. From GM's viewpoint, chairman John Smith said, "We must have an agreement that allows us to meet the demands of the changing [global] market place." Even with plant closings, job elimination, and job combinations, GM remains behind its competitors in productivity. *Business Week* cites GM's productivity as 27.3 vehicles per worker, compared to Ford Motor Co.'s rate of 33.3 per worker.

While GM has allowed the strike to drastically reduce its assembly production, they plan to proceed with the introduction of their new Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups. Dies that GM removed from the Flint Metal Fabrication plant over the Memorial Day holiday produce the parts for this new line. The dies were sent to its Metal Center in Ontario, Ohio, which is organized by UAW Local 549. According to the *Oakland Press*, Local 549 President Johnny Givand said "national union leaders gave his members the go-ahead to operate the equipment transferred from Flint." That allowed GM to continue producing a new line launched in early June. Suppliers who provide parts for these trucks continue to manufacture modest quantities.

Tom Young, a welder at the Ontario, Ohio, plant, commented, "The way they have got this set up, it's every plant versus every plant, every local versus every local."

Jim Mattis, a striker at the Metals Fabrication plant, said the stakes are high. He transferred here after GM sold the plant where he worked in Detroit. He said, "We gave away our classification to protect jobs, now we're losing them. This is not a strike over money or benefits, it's over our right to survive."

Reports in the big-business press present the strike as a fight to prevent "American jobs" from going to Mexico. This framework is often promoted by the UAW officialdom. Some workers echo this stance, such as Bill Caldwell, a UAW member at the Electro-Motive Division in Chicago. "I'm for what ever it takes to stop exporting jobs and our children's futures to foreign countries," he said, referring to the Flint strike. "We are all aware this is being done for greed and greed alone."

Rosa Garmendia, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Michigan and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, visited the picket lines June 22 with other supporters. Garmendia noted that more and more, workers are learning they have less and less in common with the bosses. "There is no strategy to negotiate 'job security' for workers in any single plant, industry, union or country," Garmendia said. "On the contrary, by trying to save our 'jobs' at the expense of other workers here and abroad, we will find ourselves out on the street along with the hundreds of millions of others. We can only advance the fight against unemployment—for jobs," she continued, "by uniting with others with others around the world who are also victimized by the impending capitalist disaster."

"One key proposal to advance the struggle for jobs — to shorten the work week with no cut in pay and benefits — is a demand that workers in every country can fight for."

Jean Luc Duval and Willie Reid are members of the UAW. Helen Meyers, a member of the UAW in Chicago, contributed to this article.

Phone strikers: 'Puerto Rico is not for sale'

Continued from front page
June 23, and Rosselló said he would sign the deal in the coming days.

The strike began with mass pickets at phone company facilities throughout the island, as workers sought to block the company from bringing in hundreds of supervisory personnel to keep operations running. Meanwhile, thousands of strikers marched to the capitol building, causing huge traffic jams in San Juan.

The government has responded by unleashing police attacks on strikers and their sympathizers. Cops escorting strikebreakers have attacked pickets with billy clubs and pepper spray. Images of bloodied strikers lying on the pavement, captured on television and in newspaper photos, sparked widespread public outrage. Some cops have been injured as well in the skirmishes.

University of Puerto Rico students who joined a sit-in by strikers in front of the PRTC's Celulares Telefónica office in Hato Rey on the first day of the strike were also beaten by the cops. "We were sitting in front of the gates when two vans with [replacement] workers tried to get in, and when we prevented them from doing so, the police just came and started hitting us with their batons," Rubie Alicea, 23, told the *San Juan*



Striking telephone workers receive support from passing motorists on the street.

Star. "They also sprayed me with pepper spray — on my mouth, face, arms, and chest."

Police superintendent Pedro Toledo, calling the strikers "mobs of criminals," said he had ordered the "Tactical Operations" riot police deployed to all the areas affected by the strike as well as at strike support demonstrations.

At a June 22 press conference, PRTC president Carmen Culpeper blamed "outside groups" for supposedly instigating violence among the strikers. Outside the press briefing hundreds of protesting unionists chanted, "Struggle Yes, Sale No!" Culpeper also complained that some 75,000 people have been left with no phone service, which she attributed to acts of sabotage throughout the island.

Culpeper has filed a suit before the Labor Relations Board to order strikers back to work, decertify the two telephone workers unions, and make them liable for damages incurred by the company.

At the demand of the PRTC, a court issued an injunction preventing strikers from standing within 50 feet of entrances to phone company offices and ordering them to stay at least 10 feet apart from each other. The injunction also bars strikers from following, threatening, or intimidating personnel brought into work by the company.

The strike has sparked an outpouring of popular support and a series of labor actions in solidarity with the telephone workers. Thousands of strikers and supporters have marched through the streets of Puerto Rico's capital day after day. On June 20, strikers

received a warm response as they solicited contributions from passing drivers along Roosevelt Avenue, where the main PRTC offices are located. A number of bus drivers stopped their buses to allow strikers to collect contributions from passengers, while dozens of onlookers on the sidewalks applauded.

Hundreds of high school and college students have rallied in support of the strikers, enthusiastically joining them on the picket lines. One of the most popular slogans of the protests is *Puerto Rico no se vende* [Puerto Rico is not for sale].

The electrical workers union, UTIER, carried out a three-day walkout in solidarity with the phone workers June 23-25. On June 24 the Teamsters and port workers union shut down Isla Grande, which includes the commuter airport, docks, and Port Authority offices. Television news reported June 24 that taxi drivers were also involved in the protests, showing images of cabs parked in front of Plaza Celulares Telefónica.

Hundreds of water workers marched June 24 to the capitol in San Juan protesting the sale of the PRTC and joined the pickets in several areas, leading to massive traffic congestion.

Unions are holding discussions to map out further actions, including a possible national strike.

Meanwhile, strikers have begun to follow Rosselló everywhere he goes. While he was at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Isla Verde, a gathering of hundreds of chanting pickets forced him to leave in a rush.

Help upgrade 'Militant' subscription system

During July, the *Militant* will be replacing its old subscription program with a new fulfillment system, one of the steps the paper has been taking to upgrade our business operations simultaneously with the transformation of book production in Pathfinder's print shop. This conversion will involve volunteers putting in about 150 hours to manually key board the existing data into the new system. The *Militant* is projecting to start the data entry July 6 and continue through July 10, take a break for the active workers conference in Pittsburgh, and resume the work July 16 through July 28. Anyone who would like to help should contact Maurice Williams at the *Militant* Business Office for more details.

'War of the entire people is the foundation of our defense'

Interview with Division General Enrique Carreras
of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba

Enrique Carreras, a division general of the Cuban armed forces, now retired, is considered to be the father of revolutionary Cuba's air force.

An officer in the Cuban air force before the revolution, he was trained as a pilot in the United States during the Second World War and after. In 1957 he was jailed for supporting efforts from within the armed forces to oust the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. After the revolution's triumph in 1959 Carreras joined in the effort to build the armed forces of the new revolutionary government. The air squadron he headed at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 was central to defeating the U.S.-organized invasion.

The following interview with Carreras was conducted in Havana, Cuba, on October 24, 1997, by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, and Martín Koppel. Barnes and Waters were in Havana at the time to participate in the October 21-23 international workshop on "Socialism as the 21st Century Approaches," sponsored by the Communist Party of Cuba, and to cover that conference for the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly, *Perspectiva Mundial*. Barnes is national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and Waters is editor of the Marxist magazine, *New Internationalist*. Koppel is editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

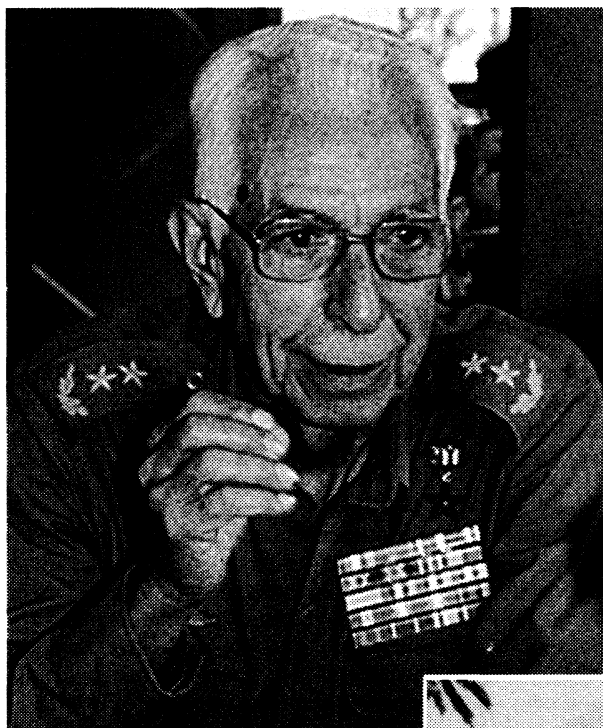
Interviews with two other veteran revolutionaries and high-ranking officers of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, conducted by the same reporters, are currently being published by the *Militant*. An interview with Division General Néstor López Cuba appeared in the June 22 issue. An upcoming issue will feature an interview with Brigadier General José Ramón Fernández.

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Waters: The interviews collected together in *Secretos de generales* [Secrets of generals], published here earlier this year, provide an invaluable insight into the social character of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), the Communist Party of Cuba, and the revolution as a whole.¹ The political lessons, the leadership lessons, captured in those interviews help the reader understand why the Cuban revolution triumphed, how Cuba's working people opened the socialist revolution in the Americas, and the way they have defended themselves for nearly 40 years against every form of aggression launched by Washington and its allies.

Your story is especially interesting because you began your political activities while an officer in the old army.

As a communist party in the United States, the SWP



Above: Militant/Martin Koppel; Right: Granma
Above, Division General Enrique Carreras during interview; Right, as a pilot in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, early 1960s.

has always acted on the lessons we learned from the Bolsheviks — the importance of carrying on political work within the army, among workers and farmers in uniform. That was our course during World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam. During the Vietnam War, we argued against those in the antiwar movement who wanted to target the soldiers in the U.S. army as if they were the enemy, even to the point of sometimes labeling all of them "murderers."

Instead, we fought for the anti-Vietnam War movement to organize the types of demonstrations and other actions that would attract GIs, not repel them. The central slogan we advocated, and which eventually became the main banner of the antiwar movement, was "Bring the Troops Home Now!" Our comrades, when they were drafted like hundreds of thousands of their generation, didn't refuse to be inducted. We organized to defend soldiers who exercised their democratic right to march and speak out against the



war, when not on active duty. Broad forces in the United States were won to this perspective over time, and anti-war GIs and Vietnam veterans became a growing — and politically very important — force in the fight against Washington's murderous assault on the Vietnamese people. Their contributions very much strengthened the Black and Chicano struggles in those years as well.

For these reasons among many others, our readers in the United States would find it interesting to learn how you became a revolutionary, as you describe in *Secretos de generales*.

Carreras: I was a soldier in the Cuban army from 1942 until 1957, so I know the life of a soldier. I reached the rank of major.

I joined during World War II, when the government established the Emergency Military Service.² I was a student at the time. I enlisted to learn how to use a rifle, and because I wanted to fly.

I came from a family of modest means. My father had been a sergeant in the army. He always told me not to join up, that I wouldn't like it. My mother was a nurse, and she wanted me to become a doctor. What I had in mind, however, was a pair of wings. I had my heart set on flying. I dreamed of being a pilot some day, but it seemed an impossible dream.

It was the war, unfortunately, that allowed me to do it. That's how I got into the military aviation academy. Within a year I had become a pilot.

I was in the service here in Cuba, patrolling the coasts, searching for German submarines that were sinking ships carrying sugar to Europe and on stopovers to or from South America. Several Cuban ships had been sunk, along with ships from the United States and other countries. That was the patrol duty I was doing at first.

In 1944, I was sent to Kelly Field [in San Antonio, Texas], to learn to fly a new type of plane. We had been flying the AT-6 and then the AT-11 trainers, and now we learned to fly the B-25 bomber. The 201st Mexican Squadron was also there.

I had a lot of trouble with English in those courses. All I had learned in Cuba was the English they taught in high school, and that wasn't enough. I learned to say "ham and eggs," so I didn't have any problem with breakfast. But at lunchtime I

would ask for breakfast again, and they wouldn't give it to me. Anyway, it was rough.

In the course of World War II, while in the United States, I learned many things. For example, I had never before seen women occupying posts previously held only by men, or training alongside men. At the time of the war there was still a lot of machismo in Cuba. We did not want to see women in the streets alone going to the store, much less working outside the home, even in the fields. The revolution has led us away from all that machismo.

At Kelly Field I saw young women training as gunners and pilots to ferry B-25 bombers from bases in the United States to Canada, and sometimes even to Britain.

That was my first experience in the United States. What I learned there — the training I received as a combat pilot — I subsequently taught to the pilots we trained in the early years of the revolution, including those who fought at Girón.³ The same tactics the U.S.-organized forces used

² The Cuban government declared war on Germany and Japan following Washington's entry into World War II. Havana created the Emergency Military Service to meet the personnel needs of its armed forces under these wartime conditions.

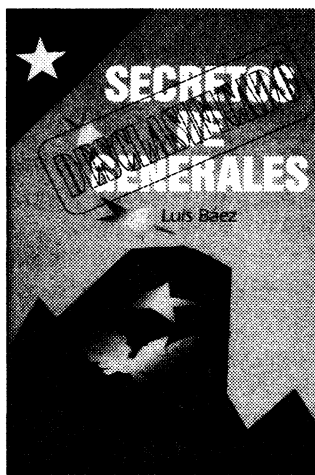
³ Playa Girón (Girón Beach) is the name used in Cuba for the April 1961 battle in which the militias and Revolutionary Armed Forces defeated some 1,500 Cuban mercenaries, organized and financed by Washington, who invaded at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The mercenaries planned to declare a provisional government to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. Within seventy-two hours of their April 17 landing, however, the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón.

Available soon from Pathfinder

Secretos de generales (Secrets of generals)

By LUIS BÁEZ

In this collection of 41 interviews, top officers of Cuba's armed forces tell how they joined the revolutionary movement to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the 1950s. They discuss their experiences around the world spanning several decades as they fought alongside national liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This "is not a textbook on the past but living history," explains Revolutionary Armed Forces Minister Raúl Castro in the preface, a "treasure of moral values and accumulated combat experience." In Spanish.



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Photos: Granma

"When morale is high, you defend the country with whatever weapons you have." Above, Cuban militia members with *cuatro bocas* anti-aircraft guns near Riviera Hotel in Havana during October 1962 missile crisis. Cuban working people didn't blink as they mobilized to meet a threatened invasion. Inset, U.S. U-2 plane shot down by Soviet anti-aircraft battery in Cuba, October 27, 1962.

in attacking Cuba, we applied against them. But we were defending a just cause, while they were coming to reconquer what they had lost. So we're not talking about moral equivalents.

When the war ended in 1945, in Cuba we started flying not only combat aircraft but also transport planes. I flew mainly in the United States. In the early 1950s I went through a series of basic and advanced combat courses for wing command officers at the Air University [at Maxwell Air Force Base] in Montgomery, Alabama. I practiced my English quite a bit during that period, too. I completed those courses in 1955 and returned to Cuba.

But by that time, the political situation in Cuba was very bad. In March 1952 Batista had seized power in a military coup.⁴

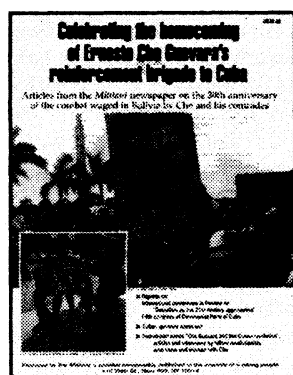
On July 26, 1953, the Moncada army garrison was attacked. This assault was the motor that drove the revolu-

tion forward, even though it failed militarily. The attackers were not able to take the garrison, distribute arms to the people, and open the offensive against Batista — which is what they intended to do.⁵ Some of the combatants were murdered right there in the Moncada on Batista's orders. Others were convicted and sent to prison, serving their sentences on the Isle of Pines, today the Isle of Youth.

I was in Montgomery at the time of the attack, and I didn't know anything about what had happened until I read it in the newspaper. Another student at the Air University, an officer in the U.S. armed forces, spoke Spanish; he was married to a woman of Cuban descent. He took me to Tampa, where his wife's family lived, and that's where I saw a newspaper report that "a group of communists" had attacked the Moncada garrison. Right from the start they claimed it was communists. I held on to that newspaper for years.

⁵ On July 26, 1953, some 160 revolutionaries launched an insurrectionary attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, and a simultaneous attack on the garrison in Bayamo. This marked the beginning of the revolutionary armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship. After the attack's failure, Batista's forces massacred more than fifty of the captured revolutionaries. Fidel Castro, the central leader of the group and commander of the Moncada assault, and twenty-seven others were captured, tried, and sentenced to up to fifteen years in prison. They were released in May 1955 after a public defense campaign forced Batista's regime to issue an amnesty.

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION AND WORLD POLITICS



Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba

Articles from the *MILITANT* Newspaper on the 30th Anniversary of the Combat Waged in Bolivia by Che and his Comrades.

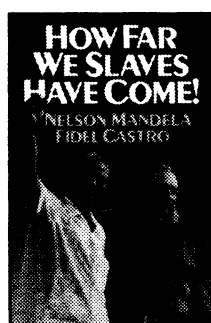
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Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro

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FIDEL CASTRO

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From Pathfinder. Available in bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Like a number of other soldiers and officers in the armed forces, I was opposed to the Batista dictatorship. On September 5, 1957, a small naval post in Cienfuegos rose up in arms,⁶ and I was ordered to bomb the city. A group of pilots in the squadron I commanded agreed among ourselves to instead drop the bombs into the water. There was supposed to have been an uprising in Havana at the same time, but it didn't happen for a number of reasons.

In prison at Isle of Pines

In any event, my participation in the revolution begins at this point. The conspiracy was discovered, and I was arrested, tortured, court-martialed, and dishonorably discharged by the tyranny. They initially asked for the death penalty. I served time in various prisons, including La Cabaña. Then they sent me to the Isle of Pines, where I began to get to know the revolutionaries who were imprisoned there.

Barnes: You got to know the July 26 people there?

Carreras: Yes, compañeros from the July 26 Movement who had come on the *Granma* were imprisoned there.⁷ Young people from the Directorate and people from the Popular Socialist Party were also there.⁸ All of them were there together.

The political views I held at that time came from the army. Anticommunism and hatred for the Soviet Union had been drummed into my head. That's what they taught us in the academies. I didn't know what a communist was, but everything I had heard about them was bad. I was influenced by all that propaganda.

While serving time in prison, however, I got to know all of them — Lionel Soto; Chuchó Montané and other compañeros from the *Granma*; the compañeros from the Directorate.⁹

By the time the revolution triumphed, I was no longer the anticommunist I had been before. I had become a progressive, a revolutionary. And then I witnessed all the acts of aggression organized by the U.S. government in the early years. I came to understand how wrong everything they taught me had been. I learned in the course of the struggle, and that's the best way.

Today I am a Communist Party member, and have been since 1965 when the party was founded. I have attended the five congresses, and I feel happy to be a Marxist, a Leninist, a Fidelista.

October Crisis

Barnes: You said you were deeply affected by the aggression carried out by Washington against the Cuban

⁶ The uprising was led by anti-Batista forces within the armed forces and supported by the July 26 Movement. When the simultaneous uprisings planned for Havana and elsewhere did not occur, Batista's forces were able to rapidly crush the Cienfuegos revolt. (See *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara, Pathfinder, pp. 266–67.)

⁷ On November 30, 1956, eighty-two revolutionary fighters, including Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Juan Almeida, and Ernesto Che Guevara, set sail from Tuxpan, Mexico, toward Cuba aboard the yacht *Granma*, to initiate the revolutionary war against the U.S.-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista. The expeditionaries landed in southeast Cuba on December 2. Surprised by Batista's troops three days later at Alegría de Pío, twenty-one of the combatants were killed; twenty-one were captured and imprisoned; of the forty who avoided capture and escaped, twenty regrouped in the Sierra Maestra mountains as the nucleus of the Rebel Army.

⁸ The Revolutionary Directorate, founded in 1955, was an anti-Batista organization based largely among university students in Havana. The Popular Socialist Party was the name taken in 1944 by the Communist Party of Cuba. In 1961, the July 26 Movement initiated a fusion with these two groups to form the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations and later, in 1965, the Communist Party of Cuba, with Fidel Castro as first secretary.

⁹ Lionel Soto was a leader of the Popular Socialist Party youth group during the struggle against Batista. Jesús "Chuchó" Montané, a leader of the July 26 Movement who participated in both the Moncada attack and the *Granma* expedition, was captured several days after the battle of Alegría de Pío and spent the rest of the war in prison.

revolution during its opening years. This month is the thirty-fifth anniversary of the October Crisis.¹⁰ Where were you during these events? How do you recall them?

Carreras: The October Crisis was a continuation of the U.S. fiasco at Girón. The defeat they suffered there led them to risk an atomic war. Girón was like a bone sticking in their throats, something they don't accept to this day. In war one either wins or loses. But they can't admit having lost in their efforts to dominate such a small country. If they hadn't failed at Girón, there would never have been an October Crisis.

We don't hate North Americans. We only hate the governments in Washington that have attempted to destroy our revolution. If the Cuban people want this revolution, why does the U.S. government seek to impose its will on us by force of arms? By economic aggression? By acts of sabotage? All these attacks against us began even before Girón.

We were not the ones who provoked the October Crisis. They did — by breaking relations with Cuba, by preparing a mercenary brigade, and an invasion. They are afraid of Cuba. They are afraid that the example of our revolution could spread. But how can we be blamed for doing things well?

Barnes: You can't be convicted for setting a good example!

Carreras: That's right, we can't. We're not the problem, but rather our neighbors who won't accept that we've freely chosen socialism. We are not a military power, or a threat to anybody. We are a small island. They know we are not capable of attacking them, that we have no intention of doing so.

On the other hand, if they set foot on Cuban soil, they will have to pay an enormous price.

Barnes: In the United States they are now publishing for the first time the transcripts of the meetings in Kennedy's offices during the October crisis. They confirm what has been reported before, but it is amazing to "hear" it all unfold meeting after meeting.

In the early days of the crisis Kennedy had decided to invade. The reasons are interesting; they discuss their options in these meetings. They thought that if they bombed the missile sites they would kill a lot of Russians, and that might lead to nuclear war with Russia. If they took military action to enforce the blockade and stop the Russian ships on the high seas, heading for Cuba, the first shots would be against Russian forces, again raising the risk of nuclear war.

So the political chiefs decided invasion was the way to go. The fighting would be primarily between Cubans and the U.S. military, they reasoned, and given U.S. military superiority it would be over fast, the risk of nuclear confrontation less.

Then Kennedy asks the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an esti-

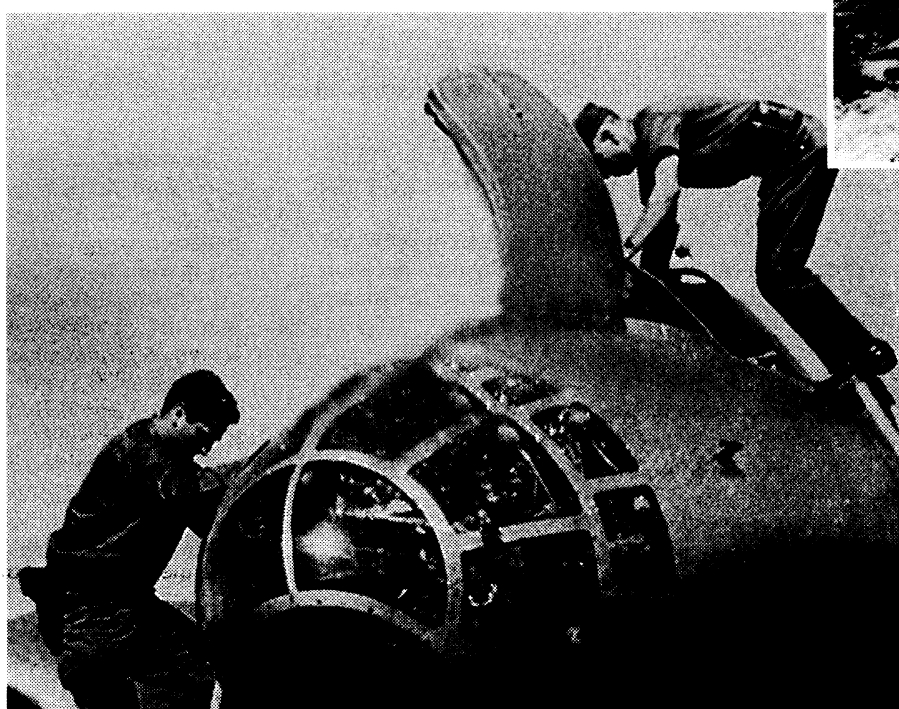
We use the example of Cuba to explain why if you want to prevent nuclear war you have to follow a revolutionary course. The imperialist rulers have to know they will face what they faced in Cuba in October 1962, what they have faced in Cuba for almost 40 years.

Carreras: Today, I'm convinced the number of casualties would be double what Kennedy was told back in 1962. Today, even more so than at that time, the Cuban army is truly the entire people.

Anyway, you asked what I was doing during the October Crisis. I was the representative of the air force at the command post of the commander in chief. Captain Flavio Bravo was the chief of operations.

We experienced some very difficult moments in our meetings, especially when flights by U.S. reconnaissance aircraft nearly provoked war. RF-101 reconnaissance planes were flying 300 meters above our bases, photographing all our equipment. Fidel said, "No more!" He gave the order to open fire on any plane that came within range of our weapons.

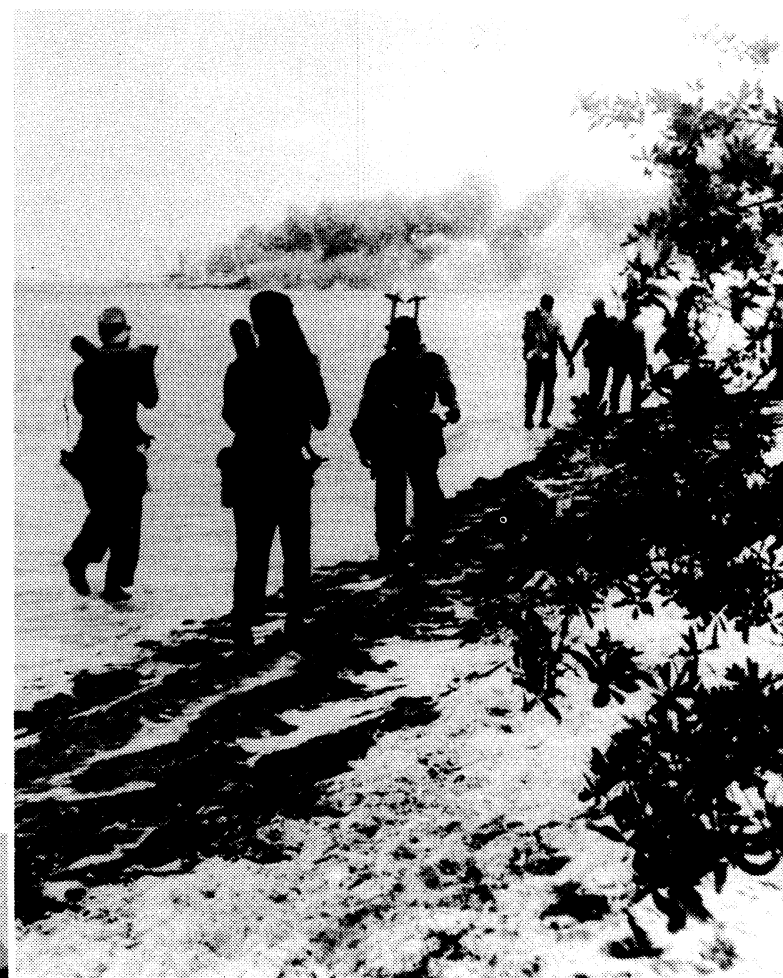
And they were indeed our weapons. The Soviet weapons were not ours. Only the Soviet officers could command that they be fired, and only upon orders from the Soviet Union.



Courtesy Enrique Carreras

We didn't have the authority to tell them, "Bring down those planes." But Fidel did give the order to open fire on reconnaissance planes that came within range of our own anti-aircraft defenses.

At that time we had only a small air force — some MIG-19 interceptors; 100-millimeter artillery (those with the longest range); some *cuatro bocas*, 37-millimeter guns with four barrels. That was it. But when morale is high, you defend the country with whatever weapons you have. Violation of our air space was a grave offense against our



Granma

"The October Crisis was a continuation of the U.S. fiasco at Playa Girón. The defeat they suffered there led them to risk an atomic war." Left, Carreras (atop plane) climbing into cockpit of IL-28 transport at time of October 1962 missile crisis. Above, Cuban soldiers at Playa Girón after defeat of U.S.-organized mercenaries at Bay of Pigs, April 19, 1961. In the background the U.S. warship Houston sinks, hit by rockets fired by a Sea Fury plane of the Cuban air force.

downing of the U-2 we thought the war had begun. The opposite happened, however. They decided to hold talks.

The Soviets took part in those talks, along with the U.S. government. But we were left out. Had we known what was happening, we wouldn't have stood for it, but as it was we had no choice. We didn't agree to the outcome, but we had to accept it.¹²

If the October crisis had not ended as it did, we would not be going through what we are going through today. I don't know if I've made myself clear. Our situation today is the consequence of that situation.

Barnes: Washington knew how to deal with the Soviet leadership; they knew how to get agreements from them. They always remember the Soviet-German pact.¹³ But the U.S. rulers don't understand Cuba. They think you are like Moscow, like Eastern Europe, only a special tropical variety. They don't know you're the opposite, that a Soviet-German pact would be impossible with Cuba.

The truth is, they may not understand you but they fear Cuba like nothing since the Russian revolution. And they

"The imperialists are afraid of Cuba. They are afraid that the example of our revolution could spread."

mate. "What will be our casualties?" Because Kennedy is a politician. He's not a military man or a dictator. He needs to weigh the political consequences.

He gets the answer. Expect 18,000 casualties in the first 10 days. That's more casualties than they ended up suffering between 1960 and 1965 in Vietnam!

From that point on in the transcripts, discussion of the invasion option recedes. The political chiefs begin in earnest to search for other alternatives.

Even today you often read articles in the United States arguing that the Cubans wanted a nuclear war but Kennedy and Khrushchev found a way out. The truth is very different, however; only the strength and determination of the Cuban people prevented war, prevented a nuclear holocaust.

¹⁰ In the face of escalating preparations by Washington for an invasion of Cuba in the spring and summer of 1962, the Cuban government signed a mutual defense agreement with the Soviet Union. In October 1962 U.S. president John Kennedy demanded removal of Soviet nuclear missiles installed in Cuba following the signing of that pact. Washington ordered a naval blockade of Cuba, stepped up its preparations to invade, and placed U.S. armed forces on nuclear alert. Cuban workers and farmers mobilized in the millions to defend the revolution. Following an exchange of communications between Washington and Moscow, on October 28 Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, without consulting the Cuban government, announced his decision to remove the missiles.

sovereignty. And when we fired the initial shots at the first squadron of planes that came, we chased them back. That was the end of the RF-101s.

Downing of U-2 spy plane

Then Washington sent in the U-2 planes — planes that flew so high our weapons couldn't reach them. That's when the Soviet officer who commanded the anti-aircraft battery in Holguín gave the order to shoot down a U-2.¹¹ I recall watching the radar screen in the command post as the U-2 went down.

I was a captain at the time, and was responsible for maintaining coordination with the Soviet air force. They had a squadron of forty MIG-21 interceptors, as well as a squadron of IL-28s that transported land mines, torpedoes, and other weapons. There was great friendship and cooperation among us in face of the threats. Nobody was doing anything crazy. The ones doing crazy things were Kennedy and the Pentagon, so the Soviet officer complied with our wishes and took action against the U-2.

The U-2 had been piloted by Major Rudolf Anderson, who was killed. I saw the body. I know that when there is one death others follow — that's how wars start. With the

¹¹ A U.S. U-2 spy plane was downed over Cuba on October 27, 1962. Contrary to instructions from Moscow, the Soviet officer, without prior permission, ordered his troops to launch missiles at the plane violating Cuban air space.

¹² Commenting on the outcome of the October Crisis in a 1992 NBC television interview with Maria Shriver, Cuban president Fidel Castro said: "Naturally we did not want war. We wanted a solution, but an honorable solution.... We didn't know that the crisis was on its way to being resolved on the basis of the almost unconditional concessions made by Khrushchev. They left everything the way it was. They left the blockade. They left a dirty war. They left Guantánamo Naval Base."

¹³ In August 1939 the governments of the Soviet Union and Germany concluded a nonaggression pact. As part of that agreement, on September 1, German imperialist troops invaded Poland from the west, and Soviet troops occupied eastern Poland. The pact made it possible for Hitler's general staff to march the Wehrmacht west without fear of a two-front war. Once western Europe had been conquered to the English Channel, in June 1941 Hitler turned and invaded the Soviet Union, catching the Soviet government and Communist Party leadership by surprise and less prepared for battle than they had been in 1939. Far from using the time to strengthen Soviet defenses, Stalin and the Communist Party leadership worldwide had deepened illusions in the supposedly stable, long-term character of the "non-aggression" pact and brought the Moscow show trials to their bloody conclusion with a sweeping purge of the Soviet officer corps, virtually decapitating the Red Army.

In a 1992 interview with Nicaraguan revolutionary Tomás Borge, Fidel Castro described the policies of Stalin prior to World War II as "a flagrant violation of principles: to seek peace with Hitler at any cost, stalling for time.... Far from gaining time, the nonaggression pact shortened it, because war broke out anyway.... If Hitler had declared war on the USSR in 1939, the destruction would have been less than the destruction caused in 1941, and he would have suffered the same fate as Napoleon Bonaparte.... With the people's participation in an irregular war, the USSR would have defeated Hitler." Stalin also "conducted a terrible bloody purge of the armed forces, practically beheading the Soviet Army on the eve of war," Castro noted.



Above: Militant/Charles Ostrofsky; Right: Granma

"The enemies of the revolution have kept on violating Cuban air space," Carreras said. "If they continue we're going to be back to the October Crisis someday." Above, protesters in Washington, D.C., condemn U.S. threats against Cuba on March 1, 1996, following the downing the previous week of two planes piloted by counterrevolutionaries who violated Cuban air space. Right, Cuban working people receive training during Day of Defense, December 1985, to defend revolution from U.S. attack. For almost four decades, Cuba's readiness to repel any aggression has stayed Washington's hand.



will never leave you alone as long as you remain the kind of example you are — one where there has never been a gap between word and deed.

When we interviewed [General Néstor] López Cuba earlier this week, he told us about the impact Cuban soldiers training in the Soviet Union during the October Crisis had on their instructors and other ordinary Russians. What about here in Cuba itself? Did you see changes among the Russian soldiers and officers, influenced by the courage of the Cuban people? Were they ready to fight alongside you if Washington decided to come?

Carreras: The Soviets had a problem with their high command in Cuba, because their officers here felt the same way we did. They faced the same situation we did. In an atomic war, all of us were going to be wiped out. All the Cubans said goodbye to our children. We'd see who was alive when it was over. War was coming. October 27 — the day the U-2 was shot down — is a date I'll never forget. I'm telling you, the thing was for real.

At the beginning of the crisis, the Russians thought nothing would come of it. But that wasn't our view. And within the command structure of the Soviet forces here many were upset with the orders they were getting from home. Their hands were tied: they had a general staff here, but the orders were coming from the Soviet Union. The general staff here didn't agree with letting U.S. planes fly reconnaissance missions over Cuba.

I'll give you an example. It is one that was never reported here, but it is part of the history of the missile crisis that you are putting together. A squadron of Soviet planes was flying from Camagüey to Havana, and by chance they came across some American planes. They had those planes in their gunsights, and requested authorization from their high command at home to shoot them down. The high command over there in the Soviet Union said no. Those Soviet pilots returned to base utterly demoralized.

The pilots' conflicts were not with us; they were with the Soviet high command back home. And the differences

were deeply felt. Those pilots were here in Cuba, thousands of kilometers from the USSR. It was their lives that were on the line.

The decision to shoot down the U-2 was not the result of an order from Moscow. It was the individual decision of the head of the Soviet anti-aircraft defense in Oriente Province.

'Brothers to the Rescue' raid

We still face these kinds of dangers today. The enemies of the revolution have kept on violating Cuban air space, and if they continue doing so — whoever does it — we're going to be back to the October Crisis some day. And while Cuba does not have atomic bombs, we do have the moral bomb of a people who won't put up with tyranny.

That's why the two planes that violated our air space were shot down in 1996.¹⁴ For months those planes had been flying over Havana and elsewhere, dropping leaflets against the revolution. Measures had to be taken. That group of extreme right-wing Cubans who have gone to Miami were violating our air space. To this day, they are making preparations to attack us. And they receive support. They are allowed to carry out these violations.

We're not going to let them, however. So another crisis could occur. It might not be in October; it could be some other month. But they need to stop and think. They need to take steps to avoid a confrontation that we don't want, and I don't think they want either. They should just leave us alone and let us work. But they've got that bone stuck in their throats.

Barnes: When those planes were shot down in February 1996, the Militant and Perspectiva Mundial retold the story of the October Crisis, to help workers and youth in the United States and elsewhere around the world understand why Cuba had to say no to violations of its sovereignty. A front-page statement by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party explained that this decisive action by the Cuban government slowed down Washington's aggressive course and was a blow by Cuba against war. If Cuba allowed that kind of violation of its air space to occur, we explained, then the next probe would come, and then the next, and then the next — and at some point there would be war.

It's Cuba's resistance that prevents a war, as it has for almost four decades. That's a very important lesson for working people in the United States to understand.

¹⁴ On February 24, 1996, three Cessna planes organized by the Florida-based counterrevolutionary organization Brothers to the Rescue were warned several times that they had entered Cuban air space. Two were shot down, and four men on board were killed. Cuba had experienced ten other violations of its air space within the previous twenty months, involving some thirty planes all told. On at least three occasions the planes scattered leaflets from the air. The same organization mounted flotillas to violate Cuban waters several times during this period. In response to these aggressive acts, the Cuban government in July 1995 publicly reaffirmed its long-standing policy that "any vessel coming from abroad, which forcefully invades our sovereign waters, could be sunk; and any plane shot down.... We have confronted this provocation with great patience, but patience has its limits. The responsibility for whatever happens will fall, exclusively, on those who encourage, plan, execute, or tolerate these acts of piracy."

Carreras: At the end of the last century, we fought against the Spanish colonial power to free ourselves. The U.S. government intervened at the end of our war of independence to advance its own policy of expansionism, going to war against Spain in 1898. What did the U.S. forces do when that war ended?¹⁵ They forbade Cubans from marching together with them as victors. They didn't even let our *mambises* enter Santiago de Cuba. Everything the U.S. forces did, from the very start of their invasion of Cuba, was aimed at creating conditions to destroy the entire *mambí* army.¹⁶

We are the continuators of that *mambí* army and its traditions. They sacrificed themselves for Cuba's freedom then, just as we are willing to sacrifice ourselves today.

I mentioned earlier that I had taken courses in the 1950s at the Air University in Montgomery. Some of my teachers there used to ask me why Latin Americans and Cubans are so rebellious — you seem to go from one revolution to another, these teachers would say. I explained to them that hunger and necessity force peoples to change, and that change means revolution.

For the past thirty-eight years or so I would add something else: that up to now, there has been no more worthwhile course for the popular masses than socialism. That

"If U.S. military forces set foot on Cuban soil, they will have to pay an enormous price."

is why we in Cuba — starting with our leader Fidel — say "Socialism or death!"

Raúl Castro

Barnes: We want to ask you about the minister of the armed forces, Raúl Castro. We posed a similar question earlier this week to General López Cuba.

Raúl is singled out for vilification by the U.S. rulers and their media, in some ways more so even than Fidel. To me it is very strange, because I spent three months in Cuba in the summer and fall of 1960 and got to know a little about the commanders of the revolution, how they

¹⁵ At the conclusion of that war, Washington took direct possession from Madrid of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam as U.S. colonies, while imposing the Platt Amendment on the Cuban government established during the U.S. military occupation. Under the provisions of that amendment — incorporated in Cuba's new constitution — Washington was given the "right" to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time and to establish military bases on Cuban soil. These provisions were eliminated from the Cuban constitution in the wake of the 1933–34 revolutionary uprising there.

¹⁶ *Mambí* refers to fighters in Cuba's wars of independence from Spain, many of them freed slaves or agricultural workers. These wars took place during 1868–78 and 1895–98. The term "mambí" originated in the 1840s during the fight for independence from Spain in Santo Domingo. After a Black Spanish officer named Juan Ethninius Mamby joined the Dominican independence fighters, Spanish forces began referring to the guerrillas as "mambies," later applying the related term "mambises" to the freedom fighters in Cuba, who adopted it as a badge of honor.

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New International

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were viewed by the people of Cuba. Raúl had a reputation for being, among other things, one of the warmest of the commanders. I came to the conclusion that they try to demonize Raúl because they fear the continuity of leadership of the Cuban revolution. They also fear the army, of course, and the armed people of Cuba. Raúl becomes a target because, next to Fidel, he is the long-time commander of those armed forces.

So, let me ask you as well: What kind of man is the commander? Why do you think the enemies of the revolution attack him in the ways they do?

Carreras: I didn't know Raúl or Fidel personally at the time of the triumph of the revolution. Nevertheless, I did know about them through the political activity they had carried out, going all the way back to Fidel's years as a student leader at the University of Havana in the late 1940s, and then Raúl's student days in the early 1950s after the Batista coup. I knew them through the actions they took at Moncada, and the *Granma* landing. They chose the line of armed struggle to overthrow the tyranny. There was no other way. They were the ones who saw it, who did it.

That's how I began to get to know Raúl and Fidel, well before I had ever met them. Fidel reached Havana a few days after the revolution triumphed, and Raúl came somewhat later, and we got to know each other there.

Personal relations between us grew as time went on. As a flight instructor I was very concerned — sometimes — that he flew. But he was indefatigable. He was a very young man. I must have been about thirty-six years old then; he was still in his twenties. That is how we began to get to know each other. In the air and on the ground. To tell you the truth, I learned a lot from the example he set.

Raúl is a very capable man, very well trained militarily, brave, and decisive. He has helped make the Revolutionary Armed Forces the vanguard of the revolution. Fidel has always had confidence in the leadership of the FAR, its organization, and its training.

If the enemies of the revolution attack Raúl, it's because he is a great commander of a great army, an army of

You could see in Raúl's face how deeply he had been affected by this breakdown of revolutionary integrity among even a handful of officers in the FAR and Interior Ministry.

In following these events, it seemed to us that as part of Fidel's response to this crisis, he turned to the FAR to shoulder even more responsibility and take broader political initiative to guarantee the direction and honor of the revolutionary government. That also seemed involved in the decision to appoint Furry [Gen. Abelardo Colomé Ibarra] to replace Abrantes as head of the Ministry of the Interior. How did the Cuban people see these developments?

Carreras: The Cuban people entrusted the continuity of the revolution to Fidel and Raúl. And we can say today that there are cadres here in Cuba capable of carrying forward that continuity who were not even born when Fidel and Raúl were already engaging in struggle.

The struggle itself is a school in which you learn things you can't learn in regular schools. You learn how to fight. You learn how to confront problems, and how *not* to confront problems. Imagine sullyng our uniform for money, to get out of an economic bind! That's what Ochoa did. And this in an army as honorable as the Rebel Army! If we have to die of hunger we'll die of hunger, but we won't



Above, Armed Forces Minister Raúl Castro and President Fidel Castro at 1989 meeting of Cuba's Council of State to review sentences given to Arnaldo Ochoa and others convicted of drug trafficking and abuse of office. "What was done by Ochoa and those involved with him is incompatible with the principles we defend," Carreras said. "Imagine sullyng our uniform for money, to get out of an economic bind!"

"Our enemies attack Raúl: they know that with him, we'll have no problems if something happens to Fidel. But there won't be a problem with anybody else either."

the entire people. He is very human. He always asks about my family — the children, the grandchildren. In his personal traits, he's very much a Cuban. He has a great affinity with the masses.

Of course, we don't want nature to take Fidel away from us, since he is, as they say, the star that shines the brightest in the Cuban revolution — and, for that matter, in the Latin American revolution, too. That's why our enemies attack Raúl — because they know that with him, we'll have no problems if something happens to Fidel. But there won't be a problem with anybody else, either.

Unfortunately, however, the enemy has a very big propaganda apparatus. But that's for external consumption. Here, they can say what they want; nobody pays much attention.

Fidel and Raúl have the best qualities you'll find in a leader. What's unusual is that two such individuals emerged, prepared to take any risk and to head a mission as difficult as the one we are carrying out.

You look at them and sometimes you ask yourself, "Where did they learn so much?" Perhaps the priests really know how to teach, because that is where they both studied!¹⁷

Revolutionary integrity and responsibility

Barnes: I remember watching some television coverage from Cuba in 1989 of various proceedings during the crisis involving Ochoa and the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁸

¹⁷ Like most children from middle-class families in prerevolutionary Cuba, both Fidel and Raúl were educated at schools run by the church. Fidel Castro describes the education he received in Jesuit-run schools in his book-length interview with Brazilian priest Frei Betto entitled *Fidel and Religion*.

¹⁸ In June-July 1989 Arnaldo Ochoa, a division general in the Cuban army, and three other high-ranking officers of the Revolution Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior were tried, convicted, and executed for hostile acts against a foreign state, drug trafficking, and abuse of office. Ochoa had organized the smuggling of ivory and other goods while heading Cuba's military mission in Angola and had established contacts with Pablo Escobar and other major international drug dealers. At the same trial, thirteen other Cuban army and Ministry of the Interior officers were convicted.

That same month, José Abrantes was removed as head of the Ministry of the Interior in connection with these events. In August he was convicted and sentenced to twenty years in prison on charges of abuse of authority, negligence in carrying out his duties, and improper use of government funds and resources. Abrantes was replaced as minister by Army Corps General Abelardo Colomé, who at the time was deputy minister of defense and first substitute for the minister Raúl Castro.

A documentary record of the case of Ochoa and others convicted with him can be found in *Case 1/1989: End of the Cuban Connection* (José Martí Publishing House: Havana, 1989).

disgrace what the people have fought for so hard and so long. We won't disgrace what so many people have died for over the years. We must honor those who have fallen.

What was done by Ochoa and those involved with him is incompatible with the principles we defend. Anyone who violates those principles knows the consequences. We regretted having to shoot someone who had once been a revolutionary. But a revolutionary cannot stain his hands, or take the wrong road in order to obtain funds for things our people need. Here there can be no contraband, no drugs. *Not here*.

If once again we are seeing prostitution — the problem of the *jineteras* that has come with the growth of tourism — it is something we are combating. I look at my little granddaughters and so much want no harm to come

Trial by fire of revolutionary air force

In *Secretos de generales*, Enrique Carreras recounts further aspects of his decades-long commitment to the defense of the Cuban revolution, including the birth and baptism by fire of the revolutionary air force.

In early 1959, he explains, Fidel Castro met with several air force pilots who had been imprisoned by Batista. "Carreras," Castro said, "you're the oldest and most experienced. The task I'm going to give you is to prepare the future pilots we'll need to defend the revolution from the air. We know that sooner or later they're going to attack us."

Carreras replied that he was ready and willing to take on the assignment.

Over the next few months, Castro regularly visited the pioneers of the new air force at the base in Havana province where they were training. "I can tell you, without fear of contradiction, that the revolutionary combat air force was born and created at the air base in San Antonio de los Baños," Carreras says. At the time, the revolutionary air force had a total of ten pilots, only three of whom had any real experience.

On April 17, 1961, at 4:45 a.m., Carreras was urgently summoned to the telephone. Fidel Castro was on the line. A mercenary army was invading Cuba at Girón Beach on the Bay of Pigs, and Castro issued immediate orders:

"'Carreras, there's a landing taking place at Playa Girón. Take off right away and get there before dawn. Sink the ships transporting the troops and don't let them get away. Understood?'"

"'Understood, commander,' I replied, and waited anxiously a few seconds. 'Is that all?'"

"In response to my question he added, '*Patria o*

to them, to my family, which means, to my people.

That's why we fought for socialism — to eliminate such evils. Look at what's happening in Russia today. Look at what's happening in Romania. Look at what's happening in all those European countries. We will not permit those evils in Cuba.

Recently a code of ethics was approved in our country reaffirming the necessity for a high moral standard among cadres, and that code is being applied. Such standards are essential if the people are to support the leadership and cadres of the revolution, because the population is small — 11 million — and very alert. People see how you live. We don't have to point out abuses, because the people do so and begin fighting the cadres implicated.

Raúl has been very vigilant, not only as a general of the army but as the second secretary of the Communist Party. He has always sought to guard the honor of the party, the example set by its members.

So, this effort by the enemy to vilify Raúl is for consumption abroad — it won't work in Cuba. They don't know the Cuban revolution.

Vietnam and Cuba

Waters: In *Secretos de generales*, you mention your experiences in Vietnam for several months in 1969. Could you tell us about that?

Carreras: I was in Vietnam, although not as a combatant. I was there for several months as part of a commission to learn from the experiences of North Vietnam's anti-aircraft defenses against the U.S. bombing. The commission included radar specialists, communications experts, and so on. We saw how the tiny Vietnamese air force was organized, and learned how they were often able to

muerte!' [Free homeland or death].

"'Venceremos!' [We shall win], I answered, full of enthusiasm."

Carreras adds, "He spoke to me with such firmness and enthusiasm that it elated me and imbued me with more courage to carry out the mission he had entrusted me with. Because the truth was our planes were rickety."

Cuba's entire revolutionary air force immediately flew off into battle. "Four days before the invasion began," Carreras notes, "the enemy forces had approximately a 5-to-1 advantage in planes and a 12-to-1 advantage in pilots." Nevertheless, "in less than seventy-two hours, ten pilots with eight dilapidated planes flew seventy missions." All told, they shot down nine B-26 bombers. "We also sank two army transport ships, three LCT boats carrying tanks, and five landing craft." In bringing down the enemy planes, the Cubans killed fourteen counter-revolutionaries, including four U.S. instructors on loan to the CIA from the Alabama National Guard.

All the while the Cuban planes hounded the 1,500 mercenary troops that had landed. Two Cuban pilots and several crew members were killed in battle.

Carreras himself shot down two planes. His Sea Fury fighter was hit twice by enemy fire.

In recognition of his distinguished record, he was awarded the medal of Hero of the Republic of Cuba, the country's highest honor, in 1989.

Carreras has written about these and other experiences in his memoirs, *Por el dominio del aire: memorias de un piloto de combate, 1943-88* (Controlling the air: memoirs of a combat pilot, 1943-88), published in Havana by Editora Política in 1995.

use the radar guidance system on incoming enemy planes to determine targets in advance and minimize the effectiveness of U.S. air strikes.

We traveled from Hanoi down close to the border with South Vietnam. The Vietnamese didn't let us go further, since several other members of our commission had already been killed as a result of taking big risks. These compañeros, who had arrived in Vietnam earlier than I did, found themselves in the middle of an antiaircraft battery under attack. A U.S. Navy plane had launched a missile against a radar installation, I believe, and the Cubans tried to take cover and watch what was happening at the same time. The missiles hit and exploded, killing them.

The Vietnamese didn't want the same thing to happen to us. They never wanted anybody to fight alongside them. They did want cooperation and aid. And they shared their experiences with us, since sooner or later we too were likely to be subjected to the same kind of aggression. We relayed these experiences back here to Cuba. It was extremely useful in training our pilots and preparing our an-



Courtesy Enrique Carreras

Here in Cuba we are fighting, we are resisting.

Special Period

Barnes: How has the Special Period affected the armed forces and its responsibilities?¹⁹

Carreras: The Special Period has had a big impact, definitely. There's a lot to say about that.

You are aware, for example, that we have virtually no oil deposits in Cuba, and the little we do have is not very good quality. It has high sulfur content. This fuel shortage keeps us from maintaining our armed forces in optimal condition.

Prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Soviet government sold us large quantities of oil, and we paid very low prices. The end of

these shipments was very abrupt. We had no time to make adjustments. Suddenly no one could find even a liter of oil. But we had maintained a strategic reserve, and that saved the day. Fidel and Raúl had always insisted on that for defense purposes. We ended up having to utilize part of the strategic reserve so the lights could stay on, so refrigerators could function, so hospitals had electricity.

As the economic situation worsened, we kept on learning. The party leadership guided this effort. We have been learning the appropriate measures to tackle the difficulties we face. We've had to change our defensive strategy, for example. We've had to cut back the armed forces and relocate many cadres to agriculture, to tourism, to study other fields. We've had to keep reducing the air force, which is the most expensive part of the armed forces.

What is our plan? Conservation of resources — so that when the time comes, when the combat alarm sounds, we have what we need. So that our planes can fly. So we can use our artillery. We have tanks and other weapons stored away, much of it underground, some above ground. The above ground weaponry is for use in the event of a surprise attack, to provide time to put the rest into service.

With the onset of the Special Period, our armed forces budget was cut in half to begin with, reducing it by billions of pesos. Then we cut it again. Now, we're making further reductions in compliance with decisions of the party congress earlier this month.

Who has made it possible for us to make these adjustments without affecting our defense preparedness? The people. The people are organized in the Territorial Troop Militia and in the reserves, as well as in the standing army.

The standing army is the part that is best equipped technically. For example, our air force has combat-ready air units that can respond immediately to attacks, giving us time to activate the people and the aircraft being kept in reserve. Some combat pilots remain on active duty and continue their normal schedule of flying time, while others fly for reduced amounts of time. Reserve units are kept ready for use, and there are pilots flying transport planes who can be called up when the combat alarm goes off or a state of alert is called. We maintain flight crews and a minimum of training. Each active-duty pilot flies between one hundred and two hundred hours during the course of a year. The reserve forces fly ten hours a year.

Thus, as needed, we can and will mobilize the same air force we had before the Special Period.

We remain combat-ready, twenty-four hours a day. Nobody flies over Cuba without authorization. Our radar units not only help with air navigation, but inform us immediately of any object that appears in our skies. As soon as the radio message comes in, the fighter planes take off.

That's what happened in 1996 with the planes from Florida we were discussing earlier. We let them come close and then told them several times to turn back. They didn't want to cooperate, however, so down they went.

So, yes, the Special Period has had an impact. We generals like to have large units, but we can't afford that pleasure right now. We have put many



"We saw firsthand the criminal character of the U.S. bombings in Vietnam.... It was a criminal war against the Vietnamese people." Above, factory worker in Haiphong, North Vietnam, at an antiaircraft battery, 1967. Top, Carreras (second from left) with comrades in North Vietnam, 1969. Cuban revolutionaries studied Vietnamese antiaircraft tactics.

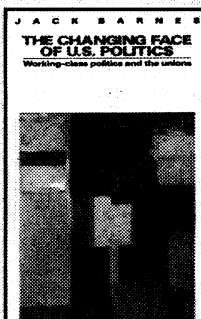
tiaircraft defenses, so that air strikes against us would be less effective.

We saw first hand the criminal character of the U.S. bombings. The U.S. warplanes destroyed all the bridges. They attacked cities using fragmentation bombs. Women and children would go into their homemade shelters — lengths of pipeline buried underground. Sometimes, however, they couldn't shelter themselves adequately, and children were killed when cluster bombs hit the ground and fragmented. We saw these things happen. It was a criminal war against the Vietnamese people.

We learned from these experiences and changed our own defensive tactics. The truth is that the enemy compelled us to keep making these changes — and continues to do so now that we are alone, now that we no longer get the aid we used to before the socialist camp, in Fidel's words, fell like a meringue. It just disintegrated.

Invading Cuba would be a very big risk for them. Cuba and the United States are very nearby, so it would be a lot harder for them to hide the consequences of the war. It would be a lot easier for people in the United States to see things close-up in Cuba than they were able to do in Vietnam — and, despite that, your antiwar movement won out. The closer to home events are, the faster your movement can win.

Let's hope they never get so crazy over there as to come here to attack us. We don't want deaths. All we want is to be able to work. All we want is to be able to help humanity, especially in Latin America, which is going through very painful times right now. There is a lot of hunger, a lot of poverty. And only revolution, only social change can salvage the situation. Today, children are paying a price for something they haven't done, for things adults have done.



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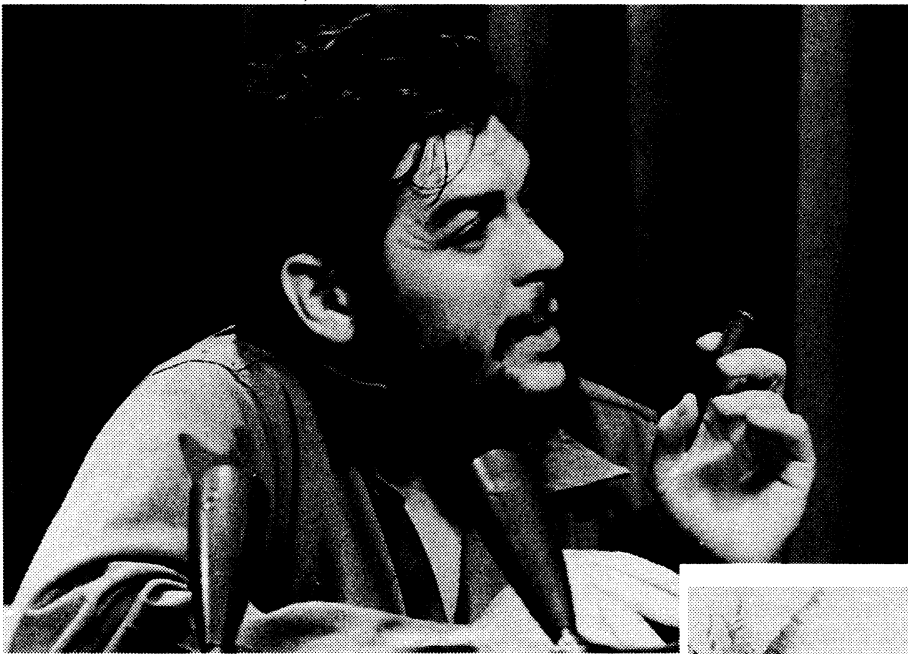
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¹⁹ The Special Period is the term used in Cuba for the extremely difficult economic conditions the Cuban people have faced since the early 1990s, and the policies the leadership has implemented to defend the revolution. With the disintegration of the regimes of the Soviet bloc that previously accounted for 85 percent of Cuba's foreign trade, much of it on terms favorable to Cuba, the island was brutally thrust deeper into the world capitalist market. The sudden break in trading patterns — which took place as the world capitalist crisis intensified, and has been compounded by the ongoing economic warfare organized by Washington — led to the most severe economic crisis in Cuba since 1959. By 1996, however, through the efforts of Cuban working people, the decline in industrial and agricultural production had bottomed out. Shortages of food and other essentials, though still severe, have begun to be eased.



Above: Prensa Latina; Right: Militant/Laura Garza

Above, Ernesto Che Guevara. "The image of Che can be found wherever there is a young person who wants to change humanity." Right, members of Che Guevara voluntary work youth contingent in Holguín province, 1994. "We are waging a war in Cuba today," Carreras said. "It's the war for beans."

planes and a lot of artillery into reserve, and it will be activated in a state of war.

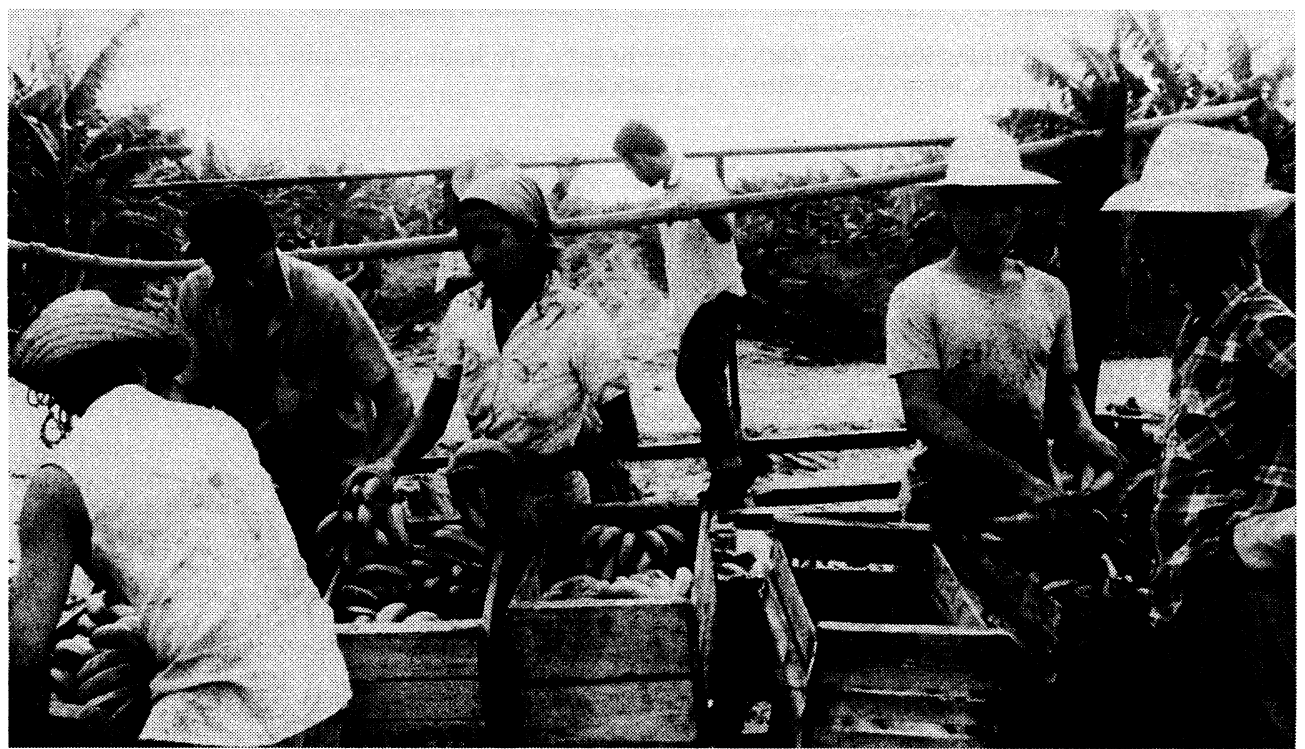
'The war for beans'

We are waging a war in Cuba today, but it's an economic war. It's the war for beans, as Raúl says.²⁰ And it's more difficult than a shooting war.

The war for beans is the one we're fighting right now. When the pilots are not flying, they are planting some of those beans, or harvesting them. They go to the farms and help out in agricultural tasks. Those on active duty rotate with those in the reserves. They keep in good shape, physically and medically. They set an example for other compañeros.

As a revolutionary, I'm still learning, even at my age. I was never a farmer, and I used to dislike the land. But when I sit at the table and eat rice, plantains, and beans, I have to ask: "Where does it come from?" It comes from the land. I'm not a good farmer, but when we go to the farms, I do my part. I want the young people to see the old-timers take part in bringing in the beans.

We have felt the cutbacks very much. But we are content. The Revolutionary Armed Forces does not have advisers of any kind. We are our own advisers. That's what



about some very important history, the traditions of a revolutionary army.

Many revolutionary-minded workers in the United States study the Russian revolution, and they develop a pretty good feel for the workers' soviets — the mass councils of workers' delegates that grew up in the heat of battle

ers and students. That's the source of our traditions. And you can't transfer experiences from one country to another.

I've seen firsthand the traditions of other armies, traditions very different from our own. For one thing, we are incapable of laying a hand on a soldier. That is the greatest aberration we can imagine. Yet once, right in front of several of us, I witnessed a Soviet general strike a soldier for being drunk. I can put up with a lot, but seeing that made me so angry I had to get out of there. Laying a hand on a soldier shows a lack of respect, and that's something we do not allow. That's just the way we are.

Barnes: Yes, and your traditions are more like those of the young working-class and peasant soldiers in the soviets of 1917 who gave everything when Lenin and the Bolsheviks called on them to defeat the imperialist invasion and the counterrevolutionary armies of the landlords and capitalists. That is what we have always believed.

The example of Che is part of your traditions, too, and

"Che's presence is being felt more and more in the new generations that are playing a key role in world developments today."

I'm doing now: I went from being a division general to an adviser in the Ministry of the Armed Forces. I was sent there by the minister [Raúl Castro]. They ask me about the early years, how we did things back then. I respond as best I can, and it's good for me.

I can assure you that the young generation is better prepared than we were — politically, intellectually, culturally, in every sense. That's what the majority of the new ministers who were just chosen are demonstrating. That's the generation that is replacing us.

Barnes: In the United States we tell revolutionary-minded workers and young people that the living traditions of the Cuban armed forces represent for us today what the young fighters in the soldiers' soviets in Russia meant for toilers the world over in 1917. It has the same kind of political attraction to revolutionists as the army Lenin and the Bolsheviks forged seventy years ago to defend the young Soviet workers and peasants republic against the counterrevolutionary bandits of that time, and against the invading imperialist armies that backed them.

Right now, the FAR is the only revolutionary army working people and youth in the United States today have a chance to see. And they need to learn about and understand soldiers in a revolutionary army, because some day they are going to be soldiers in a revolutionary army.

²⁰ In an August 3, 1994, speech to the National Assembly of People's Power, Raúl Castro said: "Today, as our president has just pointed out, the central strategic, economic, political, ideological, and military task for all Cuban revolutionaries, without exception, is to guarantee the population's food supply, and to produce sugar, as Fidel has consistently pointed out in recent times."

"Yesterday we were saying that beans are as important as guns; today we are affirming that beans are more valuable than guns, using beans generically to cover all indispensable basic foods. (However, so as not to confuse the United States; we do have guns and other weapons in plentiful supply for the defense of our country.)"

and formed the foundation of the new revolutionary government. Workers and other young people in the United States even develop somewhat of an understanding of the peasants' soviets, although fewer and fewer of them today have ever been on a farm. But they have a much harder time understanding the soldiers' soviets, since it's even a step or so further removed from anything they've ever experienced, even indirectly. So we tell them: learn what you can about the armed forces in Cuba, and you'll have about as good a feel for the soldiers' soviets as is possible short of major new revolutionary developments.

Traditions of Cuban army

Carreras: If you'll pardon my saying so, armies have their own traditions. The Soviets have theirs, of course, very strong ones. We have our own traditions — very appealing ones, which we fight to maintain and guard.

Who were our soldiers in Cuba's war of independence from Spain? The slaves who had been freed, the peasants — that's who joined up as soldiers together with Carlos Manuel de Céspedes²² to liberate Cuba. During the revolutionary war against Batista, the majority of the soldiers who joined the Rebel Army were peasants, as well as work-

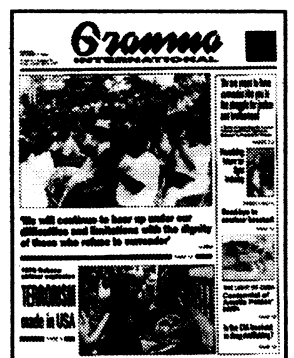
²¹ During the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana in July–August 1997, many delegates participated in a meeting with four generals of Cuba's Revolution Armed Forces (FAR) who had fought with Ernesto Che Guevara during the revolutionary war against Batista and during internationalist missions in the Congo and Bolivia. The officers were Division General Ramón Pardo Guerra and Brigadier Generals Harry Villegas Tamayo, Enrique Acevedo Glez, and Luis Alfonso Zayas. The meeting was held at the conclusion of a two-day anti-imperialist tribunal during the festival that was attended by some 1,500 delegates. [For coverage of the event, see *Militant*, August 25, and September 22, 1997]

²² Carlos Manuel de Céspedes was the initiator of the Cuban independence war of 1868–78. He was killed in 1873.

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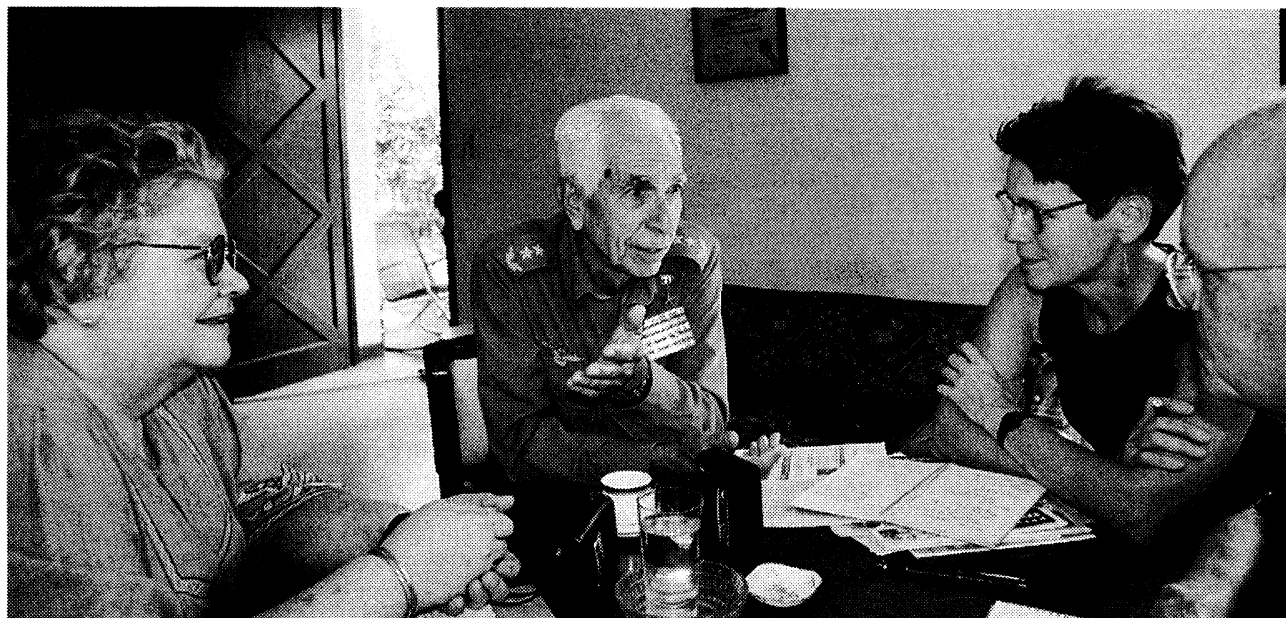
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Gen. Enrique Carreras during interview. With him, left to right, are Iraida Aguirrechu of the Cuban publishing house Editora Política, Mary-Alice Waters, and Jack Barnes.

Che Guevara

Carreras: Che is the greatest exponent of the Latin American revolution. As Fidel explained the other day,²³ few individuals have done what Che did to point the way for humanity — to give everything, as he did.

I flew with Che a number of times. I got to know his personality. Che foresaw and spoke about many of the things that are happening to us in Cuba today. He was a man of great foresight, like Fidel — who has even greater foresight. Both of them were able to see things far down the road, and that proved decisive in helping us emerge victorious from the most difficult moments the revolution has passed through.

The image of Che can be found wherever there is a young person who wants to change humanity. Che does not represent only armed struggle, only Cuba, only Argentina. No, he represents the image of the new man.

This is why the enemies of the revolution criticize Che so much. Because his example continues to threaten them. But here in Cuba, we have worked hard to bring Che forward again, to review what he fought for. And now we have him here among us.

Barnes: It seems important for us to explain in the United States that a Peruvian and a Bolivian family decided they wanted the remains of their loved ones to be buried in Cuba alongside Che's. That was a free decision by the families of these combatants.

At a public sendoff meeting in Chicago for this trip at which Mary-Alice and I spoke just the day before coming here, a comrade asked me: "So that's their final resting place?" I said I didn't know. There will be a revolution in Peru some day, and a revolution in Bolivia too. So, "final" is probably not the word we are looking for.

We had supper last night with a friend here in Havana who has never been a member of the Communist Party. "I never march in the May Day demonstrations here," she told us. "I've never liked big crowds." It's a lie when the press in United States says people in Cuba are forced to go out in the streets, she told us. "I almost never go." But there have been two times, she said, when she did go out. The first time was when U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries blew up the Cubana plane in Barbados.²⁴ And the second time was earlier this month when the military procession for Che came through her neighborhood en route to Santa Clara. "I found myself going down to join everyone else along the road," she said. That's a very important story to tell in United States, I think. Because it's another piece of evidence that if the U.S. rulers ever invade Cuba, they won't just be fighting the FAR; they

²³ Castro spoke at the October 17, 1997, ceremony in the Cuban city of Santa Clara, where the remains of Guevara and six other combatants from Bolivia, Cuba, and Peru who were part of Che's guerrilla in Bolivia were interred. Castro's speech was printed in the booklet, *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba: Articles from the Militant newspaper on the 30th anniversary of the combat waged in Bolivia by Che and his comrades*, distributed by Pathfinder Press. It is also available in the October 26, 1997, issue of *Granma International*.

²⁴ On October 6, 1976, Cuban counter-revolutionaries set off a bomb on a Cubana Airlines flight from Barbados to Cuba. All seventy-three people aboard were killed.

won't just be fighting the Communist Party; they truly will be fighting the Cuban people.

Waters: Is it accurate that you taught Che to fly?

Carreras: Yes, that's partially true. Che started out flying with a compañero who had been in his column in the Rebel Army. He had been a crop-duster pilot. This compañero — his name was Orestes Acosta — died in the air attack on our bases that preceded the invasion at Girón.²⁵ So Che came to me and said, "Carreras, why don't you teach me aerial acrobatics?" He loved acrobatics.

I'll tell you an anecdote. Whenever I fly, whether as a pilot or an instructor, I'm always careful about safety measures — and even more so when I had Che in the plane.

But Che always had a cigar in his mouth. He loved cigars. He was a very respected person, and I didn't know quite how to tell him, "Throw away that cigar before you blow us both up!"

So at first I said, "Commander, permit me to hold your cigar while you fly."

"No, Carreras, it's out. The cigar isn't lit."

Then I asked him, "So if it isn't lit, why do you need the cigar in your mouth? I'll hold it for you."

"No, it relieves my asthma."

He had an answer for everything! Imagine! Cigars help

²⁵ On April 15, 1961, as part of the preparations for the Bay of Pigs invasion two days later, Washington organized assaults against Cuba, bombing air bases near Santiago de Cuba and Havana. Seven Cubans were killed and fifty-three wounded. The following day, at a mass rally to honor the victims of the attack and to mobilize the entire population for the coming war, Fidel Castro proclaimed the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

your asthma!

He said it so seriously, however, that I let him talk me into keeping the cigar. But whenever he flew with me, I always made sure the cigar wasn't lit. He was the minister of industry and had other major leadership responsibilities. If Che's plane had caught fire, what a price to have paid for a cigar!

My relations with Che were working relations, and we never had much of a chance to talk when we were on the ground. At one point Che was head of the Department of Instruction, so as head of the air force I had various working meetings with him to coordinate training on naval and army aircraft. That was when he was working in INRA [National Institute of Agrarian Reform].²⁶

I learned a great deal from Che, and, like many others, deeply regret that he was killed. But Che is not dead. In fact, I believe his presence is being felt more and more in the new generations that are playing a key role in world developments today.

²⁶ The Rebel Army's Department of Instruction was responsible for political education in the fast-growing military in the period after the January 1959 victory. In October 1959 the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) was founded, incorporating the Rebel Army — which continued to be called by that name for several years — as well as the Rebel Air Force, the Revolutionary Navy, and the Revolutionary National Police. Ernesto Che Guevara headed this department beginning in early 1959. *Verde Olivo*, the FAR's magazine, was "published under the guidance of the Department of Instruction of the Revolutionary Armed Forces." The Political Directorate of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, currently headed by Div. Gen. Néstor López Cuba, is responsible for political education in the FAR today.

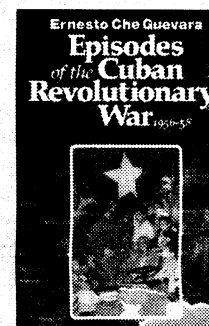
Che was named head of INRA's Department of Industrialization in October 1959. This was the predecessor of the Ministry of Industry, founded in early 1961.

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Canada meatpackers

Continued from Page 16

started, five people trimming loins got out 3,200 a day," he said. "Now they want 6,400."

A 20-year-old worker, new to the plant, said he had bought a motorcycle just three weeks before the strike and ended up losing it because he couldn't pay. Despite this, he said, he never considered crossing the line.

Jody Spellman, also 20, started in the plant in February, getting \$8.25 as a skinner on the butt line and was just short of completing probation when the strike began May 4. He disagreed with company claims that their offer would benefit workers like him. "The raise is only temporary. I would get more money at first, but then I would lose," he explained. "And I hate what it would do to workers who have worked here for years. Fletcher's wants to take away what they have. I don't think that is right."

Ed Zwaan, who has worked in the plant for more than 15 years, said the unionists are united. "There are lots of nationalities here, but we're all friends and we're solid on the picket line," he said. "People realize if they go in they won't have a say inside the plant, and we'll all be working for much lower wages." While many workers were born in Canada, there is a significant component of workers born in Asia, the Philippines, Central and South America, as well as from Iran, Russia, Poland, and other European countries.

On June 5, Rouz Aghmiouni, 24, who had been riding the buses across the picket lines for two weeks to work in the plant, quit and walked out to join the pickets.

He told the *Militant*, "I needed a job, but I felt bad about these people. When I was leaving the bus at the drop-off place after work one day, Darren, a striker, asked me if he could talk to me for a minute. He told me about the strike and said, 'If you want to find a real job, come to us.' So I decided to quit, and the union president is helping me find another job. I feel really happy now."

That same day in Regina, Saskatchewan, about 100 UFCW members protested in front of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's head office to show support for the striking workers in Alberta. Fletcher's is 45 percent-owned by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The pool, an agribusiness giant with \$4.1 billion in annual revenues, is on a drive to increase pork production while driving down costs.

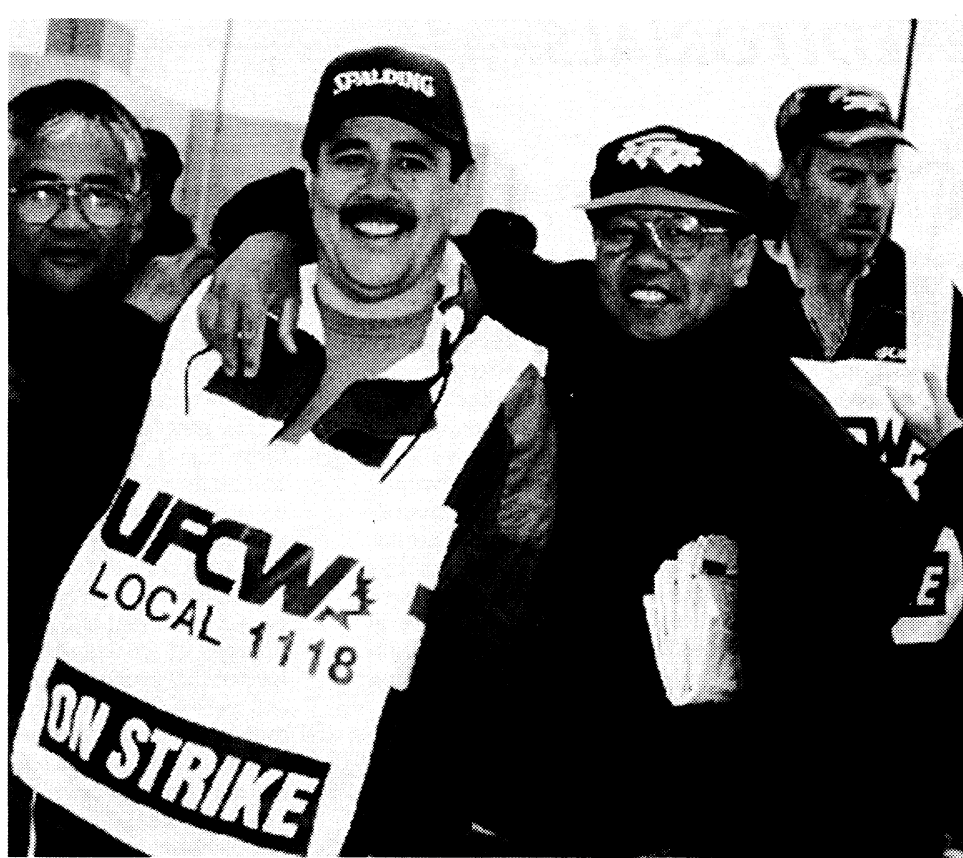
Upon purchasing Fletcher's last year, CEO Don Loewen said the pool's "hog production initiative in Western Canada" aims

to triple hog production within the next four to five years, entering into joint ventures to build hog farms, each to produce around 55,000 hogs per year.

Alan Weenink, who has worked in the plant for two years, used to have a cattle ranch, but he "couldn't make a go of it." His cousin is a hog farmer. He doubts the company's claims that farmers would benefit if Fletcher's wins their wage cuts. "What's going to guarantee farmers will get more for their pigs just because the company has more money? Fletcher's has said their mandate is lower taxes, lower wages, lower pig prices. I don't think our demands hurt farmers."

Sergio Fuentes summed it up, "The company makes money out of the farmers and out of us."

Jacque Henderson is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Vancouver, British Columbia. Maggie Trowe is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union in Marshalltown, Iowa. Aiden Ball, a student at Burnaby High School, contributed to this article.



UFCW Local 1118 pickets at Fletcher's Fine Foods in Red Deer, Alberta, June 5.

Militant/Margaret Trowe

SEPTA strike enters fourth week

Continued from front page

of workers injured on the job after six months' compensation.

"We never went through this before where they're trying to take everything — before it was just about money," TWU member Hank Lee told *Militant* reporters while picketing the SEPTA depot at 19th and Oregon Street. Lee has been a SEPTA operator for 21 years.

Democratice mayor Edward Rendell is giving SEPTA's antilabor efforts total support. After being forced to retreat from his call for SEPTA to break the strike by resuming passenger service with management operating equipment, he blasted the City Council June 19 for "pandering to the union." He complained that City Council members "chickened out" of seeking a court injunction to order the strikers back to work in the name of forcing both sides to negotiate.

On June 19 the council staged hearings to provide a forum for complaints of hardships caused by the strike. Most of those who spoke, however, refused to be drawn into attacking the union, holding SEPTA management responsible for their troubles. Louis Collins, for example, speaking on behalf of

the Center on Disability, said it was "important to resume negotiations so that they could get over the impasse that we believe SEPTA has created for the union."

The 400 strikers who had mobilized for these hearings rose to their feet and applauded after Socialist Workers Party congressional candidate Nancy Cole thanked "the Transport Workers Union for standing up to the fare raisers and service cutters in SEPTA management and to the union-busting city hall administration of Mayor Ed Rendell."

Cole, a cleaner at US Airways and member of the International Association of Machinists, explained that the issues in this strike "are the same company demands we face in the airline industry. At US Airways, Northwest, TWA, and other airlines, workers gave millions of dollars in concessions and lost thousands of jobs.... Now that they're making record profits, workers expect to recoup some of those losses, but the employers insist on yet more takebacks. We are looking to the TWU for an example of how working people can take on these attacks, and you can bet that the airlines are also watching this battle closely."

Following these hearings, the City Council passed a resolution to seek court-ordered negotiations. Council President John Street delayed implementation of this vote, however, after SEPTA and the union voluntarily began talks on June 22.

Rendell has announced that the city will be offering low-interest loans of \$3,000-5,000 to small businesses harmed by the strike.

The TWU has responded to SEPTA's threats and attempts to isolate it by calling for a "Mass Rally at Independence Mall" here for June 27.

The call for the action explains, "The crusade goes on in TWU's epic struggle for survival against a union-busting, family-busting transit management intent on stripping away the gains of the past 40 years, and hell-bent on creating a future workforce of underpaid part-timers." The flyer continues, "The entire nation is looking at this strike."

This call caps a week of union actions including mobilizations on three days for City Council meetings. "We are 100 percent strong!" is how striker Clinton Henderson, a cashier on the Market-Franklin Line for 13 years, described the situation while picketing at the Upper Darby Station.

TWU pickets halted service on the suburban line in Chester County on June 18. A judge quickly ordered them back to work. Now every county surrounding Philadelphia has issued an injunction aimed at halting solidarity with the strike.

Although the media here has played up the fact that there are no union strike benefits and that workers are beginning to feel the pain, strikers on the picket line deny this. They say most workers used the period when the union extended talks after their contract expired last March to put money aside for a strike.

"This is one of the better prepared strikes," LeRoy Bynum, a trackless trolley

operator for 29 years, told the *Militant*. The TWU's credit union also announced this week that it is making loans (\$500 every two weeks at 8 percent interest) available to strikers who do need help.

As the strike enters its fourth week, some of those riders most seriously inconvenienced have bought into SEPTA's scapegoating of the union for these problems. Workers on the picket lines have ready answers for the most frequently expressed anti-union points, explaining the nitty gritty of their working conditions as compared to the sound bytes that SEPTA uses of "antiquated work rules."

"People don't understand how we're being separated as classes," Bynum explains. "You can see SEPTA's concern for the suburban lines and not for the city lines. It's part of [Rendell's] total direction of breaking our union."

Pete Seidman is a member of the United Auto Workers in Newark, Delaware. Betsy Farley and Nancy Cole contributed to this article.

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—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK MANHATTAN

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Philadelphia workers discuss strike

BY PETE SEIDMAN

PHILADELPHIA — This week, supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign gathered 570 names on petitions to put congressional candidate Nancy Cole on the ballot. This brings the total as of June 24 to 1,340, well within reach of the goal of collecting nearly double the required 1,000 names by June 28.

While petitioning, campaign supporters were not only able to introduce the socialist platform to many for the first time, but also got a good picture of how many workers in this city are reacting to the campaign by Democrats, Republicans, and the big-business media to isolate the striking SEPTA unionists.

"They have to do what they have to do," said one shopper outside the ACME supermarket in South Philadelphia June 21. "They're working people just like me," said another. A clear majority of those asked readily signed the petition and indicated support for the TWU.

There is also a definite minority, especially among those who have been seriously inconvenienced by the strike, who express hostility to the union's struggle. One worker who arrived at the ACME with his two children and his wife — all on bicycles they said they had to buy because of the strike — was very vocal in shouting his opposition to the strike and urged people not to sign the petition because of Cole's pro-union stance. "Why should we suffer like this so that the drivers of busses and trains can endanger us by using drugs?" he argued, picking up on SEPTA's attacks on "irre-

sponsible" union opposition to a proposed "zero tolerance" drug policy in the final contract offer.

Strikers on the picket line point out that SEPTA's demands exceed already existing federal standards enforced under the previous contracts and supported by the union. The new standards would do away with a worker's present right to enroll in rehabilitation programs aimed at helping them keep their job.

Among critics of the union who are Black, the most frequent argument is that SEPTA workers are too highly paid.

Striker LeRoy Bynum, who is Black, responds that "a lot of criticism in the Black community comes from people who aren't working. They look at our wages and it seems like a lot. But many of us started off at \$2 an hour 30 years ago. Now we make more, but it's our position that we're still short of where we should be."

And SEPTA is proposing to cut pay for new employees from the current 80 percent of maximum to 60 percent, while stretching out the time to reach the top from three years to six.

The same government that is cutting hard-won social benefits in the Black community is also going after the SEPTA workers, Vaughan Stockton, an operator for 30 years noted. "They're trying to get out of pensions and benefits. It starts with the federal government on down. If they're cutting all these programs, where are the dollars going? Our taxes aren't going down! But they are cutting down on welfare."

Cuba's revolutionary example

"The imperialists are afraid of Cuba. They are afraid that the example of our revolution could spread," says Enrique Carreras, a division general in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, getting to the heart of why Washington's hostility to the Cuban revolution doesn't end.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the decisive battles led by the Rebel Army that triumphed with the victory of the Cuban toilers over the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista, opening the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. The interview with Carreras in this issue of the *Militant* — and the ones with generals Néstor Lopez Cuba and José Ramón Fernández that have already been published or will appear in these pages in July — are invaluable for fighting workers and youth around the world in understanding the Cuban revolution and the example set by its communist leadership.

These leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces explain how by mobilizing in their millions, the Cuban people have stayed the hand of imperialist war aims. The Cuban leadership's unwillingness to compromise their dignity and sovereignty, even under the threat of nuclear attack by Washington, is what stayed the U.S. rulers' hands during the "missile crisis" in October 1962, preventing

war. Maintaining the same unwavering stance, Cubans stood their ground again just two years ago, shooting down two planes whose pilots — opponents of Cuba's socialist revolution — violated the island's air space despite numerous warnings.

The generals describe Cuba's internationalist record — from Algeria to Vietnam to Nicaragua — joining those around the world fighting imperialism. This is in continuity with the course set by the Bolsheviks who led the first socialist revolution in history. And the interviews show why workers and farmers in Cuba — because they have taken power — can resist the impact of the capitalist economic crisis that is devastating the lives of hundreds of millions of working people around the world today. In face of this economic crisis, known in Cuba as the "special period," the communist leadership there is able to mobilize the ingenuity and creativity of the unions, mass organizations, and the revolutionary army to find ways to resist and minimize its effects on working people.

We encourage our readers to study and discuss these interviews with others, and to make a special effort to get them into the hands of co-workers, strikers, Puerto Rican independence fighters, and others.

NATO, Ottawa hands off Kosova

The following statement was released June 23 by Michel Dugré and Elssa Martinez, candidates of the Communist League in Canada for mayor and city council in Montreal, respectively.

All working people across Canada should oppose the June 20 decision by the Canadian government to send six CF-18 aircraft fighters and 130 troops to Italy to join the NATO buildup toward a military intervention in Kosova and neighboring Balkan republics — including air strikes against Serbia. They should also demand the immediate lifting of all sanctions by Ottawa and other imperialist powers against Serbia, including the suspension of export credits and the refusal of landing rights for Yugoslav aircraft in Canada. The members of NATO, an imperialist military alliance dominated by Washington, use the brutal assault by the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic against the struggle for self-determination by the Albanian population of Kosova to justify their move.

But the war moves by Washington, London, and Ottawa have nothing to do with helping the just struggle of the Albanians in Kosova — an historically oppressed nationality in Yugoslavia, more and more of whom are supporting the call for independence in face of discrimination and repression by the Milosevic regime.

Since when do imperialist jackals, as revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara justly called them, care about the well-being of the oppressed and exploited of this world? Since when does Ottawa defend the right to self-determination of oppressed nations, beginning with the Quebecois and the Natives inside its own borders?

NATO's buildup in Kosova is aimed against the working people of that region of the world — and ultimately at those in Russia. Close to 10 years after supposedly

winning the cold war, the imperialists are far from having reestablished their capitalist system of exploitation anywhere in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. To do that, they need to smash directly and militarily the class — our class, the working class — that kicked them out decades ago through powerful anticapitalist revolutions.

That's what they are attempting to do by occupying Bosnia with 34,000 troops, in expanding NATO up to the border of Russia, in building up their military presence in the Middle East south of Russia, and in striving to get their foot in along Asia's Silk Road — ultimately an imperialist encirclement of Russia whose logic is an all-out war against this workers state.

The stakes of what is happening in Europe are extremely high for all working people around the world. But we should remind ourselves that imperialism acts today from a position of weakness. Its capitalist "free market" system is in a deepening crisis, from Mexico to Southeast Asia. Working people have been displaying a new mood of resistance internationally, from Indonesia to Northern Ireland to the striking paperworkers in Eastern Canada. And those who have defended for decades a policy of class collaboration with the capitalists under the guise of "communism" are no longer the obstacle they once were.

That's why we will use our working-class campaign for mayor and city hall of Montreal on picket lines, at plant gates, in actions for Quebec independence, and in working-class neighborhoods to build solidarity with the struggle of the people of Kosova for self-determination and to explain why working people should reject the imperialist buildup in the region.

Ottawa and NATO out of the Balkans!

Lift all sanctions against Yugoslavia!

Support the fight for self-determination in Kosova!

Kosova: Washington probes intervention

Continued from front page

ment the guerrillas say they control more than 40 percent of Kosova territory and have 30,000 armed fighters.

The rebels are standing up against 50,000 Serbian soldiers and special police forces, whose sweeps have left more than 300 people dead and displaced 60,000 from their homes since March.

NATO still planning bombing raids

While a military onslaught on Serbia has been delayed, Washington and its imperialist allies in NATO are still planning bombing raids and using ground troops in the name of defending Kosova. As part of this, Canadian government officials announced June 20 a decision to send six warplanes and 130 troops to Italy, to be integrated with the forces of the other NATO powers in the region.

On June 23 ambassadors from the 16 NATO member states met in Brussels, Belgium, to work out future war moves in the Balkans, the Associated Press reported. That same day U.S. ambassador Richard Holbrooke met with Serbian president Milosevic to deliver what the *New York Times* said "could be the final warning" before the imperialist military alliance launches air strikes on Serbia.

Holbrooke traveled to Kosova the next day where he met with leaders of the UCK as "all part of a process" to supposedly foster negotiations. "I wouldn't want to get your expectations up that we're going to have any breakthroughs," though, he told CNN reporters.

Despite professing outrage at Belgrade's massacre of Albanians, the imperialists are not calling for complete withdrawal of Serbian military forces from Kosova. U.S. government officials have opposed the Albanian demands

for independence.

"We support enhanced autonomy," declared U.S. State Department spokesperson James Rubin. "People are deluding themselves if they think that they are going to achieve independence."

UCK commander Lum Haxhiu responded after meeting with Holbrooke, "We need freedom, not just peace. It is freedom we are fighting for."

Washington and its imperialist allies are using Belgrade's war on the Albanians in Kosova as a pretext for their military moves. The U.S. rulers are pressing to deepen intervention in the Balkans with the aim of reestablishing capitalism in Yugoslavia. Its war moves in the region are linked to NATO expansion and tightening the imperialist encirclement of the Russian workers state.

In a related development, the U.S. military organized exercises June 23 with Ukrainian officers at military base near Kiev using an "observation" aircraft.

The procapitalist president of the republic of Kosova, Ibrahim Rugova, said only intervention by the North Atlantic military alliance would force the Serbian government to pull out its military and police forces. He praised NATO's June 15 show of force that included 85 war planes from 13 countries. While claiming support for independence, Rugova asserted that the Kosova leadership "would accept an international protectorate."

Meanwhile, hundreds of parents of Serbian soldiers demonstrated at the Yugoslav Army headquarters in Belgrade demanding the withdrawal of Serbian military forces from Kosova. Some Serbian troops are deserting the army, according to the Kosova Democratic League (LDK) Information Commission in Gjakova.

Rail workers win back job of fired socialist

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Union workers at Amtrak won a victory with the reinstatement of Tom Headley on June 10. More than 200 unionists from various crafts on Amtrak's northeast corridor signed petitions demanding the company return Headley to work. Supporters of Headley circulated the petition at terminals in Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston. The last signatures on the petition came from striking members of the Transport Workers Union in Philadelphia. Ten workers wrote letters to Amtrak supporting reinstatement of the engineer.

At a victory celebration sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum on June 19 Headley explained, "By firing me Amtrak attempted to send me and my co-workers a message — don't mess with us, or we can hurt you. But they failed," he added. Some of Headley's co-workers who were unable to attend sent messages. Thomas R. Jones, a former president of the International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers Local 1050, wrote, "We must breathe new life into the old labor slogan 'an injury to one is an injury to all.' That kind of solidarity was important in this case, and it will continue to be so in the future."

A message from Warren Wills, a 22-year car repairman, explained, "By defending Tom, we defend our own rights as well. Tom is not the first person to be subjected to this kind of treatment, and until this society is changed in very fundamental ways, he won't be the last. But on this occasion, we dared to fight them and we won."

Amtrak conductor Ralph Nolletti refuted the company's charge that Headley is an unsafe worker. Referring to a letter he had written to Amtrak management supporting the reinstatement of Headley, Nolletti wrote, "It was the yard crew of Tom Headley and Mark Easton that taught me to work safely in Washington Terminal."

Conductor William Link wrote, "Your long fight for equal justice for all railroad workers including yourself is a shining example of what we can accomplish."

Headley, a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) and the United Transportation Union (UTU), was fired in November 1996. He was charged with failing to clear a spring switch, which resulted in the derailment of an engine. Headley was finally reinstated by a public law board, a three-judge panel consisting of a company representative, a union representative, and a third member paid by the government under provisions of the Railway Labor Act to officiate and cast the deciding vote. Many workers were appalled at the disproportionate discipline meted out to Headley. The derailment was minor by Amtrak's own admission — no injuries, no track or equipment damage, and no delay of trains. To justify his dismissal the company dragged out every infraction on Headley's record over his 10 years of employment.

Headley is known on the job as a socialist and for distributing books and pamphlets by revolutionaries and working-class fighters. Several workers have pointed to this as the real reason Amtrak wanted to get rid of him. In its appeal before the board the BLE pointed out that Headley was denied due process and given unequal treatment in the company's "premeditated hunting expedition."

"The truth is," said Headley, "the master class never wants an abolitionist on the plantation. When they go to war by bombing the workers of Iraq or Panama they don't want someone around who will question it—much less someone who will organize workers to oppose them."

Andrea Morell, who won her job back earlier this year after being fired by Amtrak in Boston, also spoke.

Headley is back on the payroll but will be required to complete a retraining program over several weeks.

Sam Manuel is a member of UTU Local 454.

Building July 25

Continued from front page

tee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners kicked off the meeting with a presentation on the history of the colonization of Puerto Rico. Juan Marcos Vilar, a national leader of the National Committee who came from Chicago, spoke about the historical importance of this year's actions, which mark 100 years of struggle against U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico. "We want to have a strong march and voice our will for independence and for release of the political prisoners," Vilar said.

Guillermo Morales Pagán, son of Puerto Rican political prisoner Dylcia Pagán, who came from Chicago, said, "We want to get as many people as possible out to protest this year and deal a knockout blow [to Washington] to get the prisoners free." Vilar said activists are building the event in Boston, Cleveland, New York, Hartford, Connecticut, and across the Midwest and elsewhere. "In Minnesota we have a full busload!" Vilar reported that pro-independence forces are organizing a July 25 event in San Francisco to coincide with the other actions. "No matter where you are — D.C., New York, or Alaska — stand up and do something for independence on that day!"

Rose Ana Berbeo, a member of the International Association of Machinists, contributed to this article.

Rail workers in Britain strike over wages, conditions

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area,

the Titan Tire factory here June 21. The unionists have been on strike against Titan since May 1 to oppose forced overtime and a two-tier wage system and to fight for pension benefits.

On June 18 strikers received letters from Titan president Gary Carlson claiming contract talks had reached an "impasse" after the company issued its "last, best, and final offer." In a media interview Carlson threatened, "If anyone chooses not to come back to work, they need to

tators for 10,000 bus and truck drivers in Norway reached a tentative contract agreement June 10. The contract provides for wage increases of between 9 and 13 Norwegian krone per hour (1 krone = \$0.13). One driver, Vidar Bakken, told the daily *Aftenposten* June 10, "This was not good. Our demand was 17 krone an hour." Another driver, Rune Frydenberg, added, "I didn't want to go in to work today when I heard the result. The negotiators should have been removed when they accepted an offer like that one."

The contract also stipulates pension agreements for all the unions for the first time.

The truck drivers organized in the Transportation Workers Union will vote on the contract June 26. They can strike again on July 5 if they vote no.

Meanwhile in late May, 20,000 public service employees, most of them health-care workers, went on strike. The Norwegian government moved in and ordered the unionists back to work June 3, as the Danish government had done against the general strike in Denmark in early May. It imposed a contract settlement of 10,000 krone a year for every worker with adjustments for the lowest-paid.

On June 15 the Norwegian government halted yet another strike, this time by 6,000 public employees, including air traffic controllers. The strike lasted a week and a half. In the final days of the strike, the air traffic controllers grounded most of the air traffic in southern Norway.

At the state-owned telephone company Telenor, about 1,000 workers walked out June 13 over wages, work schedules, and other disputed questions.

Rockwell strikers approve contract, return to work

CORALVILLE, Iowa — On June 12, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1634 at Rockwell Collins here approved a new five-year contract, ending a strike that began May 28. The vote was 378 to 54.

The 650 workers at Rockwell Collins produce communications and guidance systems for commercial and military use. On May 28 the electrical workers in Coralville and Newport Beach, California, walked off the job against a contract proposal they had rejected. A similar offer was approved by workers at the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Dallas, Texas, plants. The 600 IBEW members at the California facility remain on strike.

Workers at Rockwell Collins had rejected the company's offer of a five-cent-per-hour increase, more contributions by workers to their medical benefits, and postponement of eyecare coverage until the year 2001.

The duration of the contract went from three to five years. Top wages

Thousands of hospital workers rally in New York



Militant/Rose Ana Berbeo

Chanting "No Contract, No Work," around 13,000 hospital workers marched from Central Park to Times Square June 18. The members of National Health and Human Service Employees Local 1199 pledged to strike July 1 if 35 private hospitals in New York City failed to meet their contract demands by June 30. The main issues include a pay increase and the threat of layoffs — projected at more than 15 percent of the workforce of 50,000 in the next several years. Hospital and union negotiators announced a tentative deal June 21 that would reportedly avoid layoffs of current employees, but cut 3,000 jobs through early retirement. Unionists are voting on the offer.

ON THE PICKET LINE

including interesting political discussions.

LONDON — Some 9,000 track and signal maintenance workers across Britain, members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT), struck for four days beginning June 19. The RMT strike is against reductions in overtime payments, the introduction of more flexible shifts, attempts to alter where workers start work, and other attacks on working conditions, as well as pressing for a substantial pay raise. The strikers are employed by nine different companies across Britain. Their action marks the first nationwide rail strike since the sell off of the railroads in February 1996.

A growing proportion of maintenance workers are employed by contractors on a casual (temporary) basis, not by these nine companies. During the strike the rail companies are using these casual workers along with strikebreakers around the clock to keep the rail system open.

Reports throughout the country indicate the strike is unevenly supported. At London Euston, London Victoria, and Clapham, workers report almost everyone is out, but at other depots support appears more patchy. Only a handful of small picket lines have been organized, largely on the initiative of a few strikers. At Hither Green in South London, a key maintenance depot, workers have organized themselves to ensure effective picketing, but this is the exception. Most other rail workers know little of the issues at stake.

Despite this John Redwood, Conservative Party trade and industry spokesperson, warned after 6,000 London Underground workers struck June 15–16 against the threatened privatization of the subway, "It is back to the bad old days, the bad old days of the 1970s. There is a lot more strike action to come." The rail maintenance workers are scheduled to strike again for a week, beginning June 29. This time they'll be joined by 500 workers employed by Rascal who run the rail network telephone service. Then July 12 London Underground workers are scheduled to strike again for 24 hours. In an editorial the *Financial Times* characterized their action as a "covert attack on the Labour government."

Meanwhile 450 RMT crew members on South West Trains pushed back a company move to impose driver-only train operation after a 5-to-1 vote for strike action. This is the first time a driver-only move has been withdrawn since it began to be introduced in the early 1980s.

Titan Tire strikers reject contract in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa — In response to a company ultimatum, 250 members and supporters of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 rallied outside

make that decision understanding that they can be permanently replaced."

The protest included strikers, relatives, and workers from the Bridgestone/Firestone tire plant across town, who are members of USWA Local 310. "We want a contract!" and "We will win!" resounded off the walls. Capturing the mood of resolve, striker Chris Boagard said, "Without a fair contract, [Titan owner Maurice] Taylor might as well close the plant."

Marvin Cason said, "We can't go back now. If we went back we'd be worse off than when we went on strike. In order to accomplish something, you have to stay here until it's done." One hundred union supporters returned for a protest the morning of June 22 as strikebreakers and bosses reported to work. Since May 26 some 40 scabs have been working in the plant. Des Moines police turned out to help Titan security usher the line-crossers into the plant parking lot.

Titan's contract proposal includes a 30-cent-an-hour raise, an annual bonus dependent on production speedup, no substantial relief from mandatory overtime, and continuation of the two-tier wage scale. The company withdrew pension contribution and job security provisions agreed to earlier in the contract talks. Strikers are adamant: the scheme is unacceptable.

On June 20 the unionists held two meetings to discuss the new turn in their fight. After each meeting, hundreds paraded up to the Titan plant entrance to dump their copy of the Carlson letter, including Titan's contract proposal, into trash cans. Sathiene Seychareun, a Laotian-born striker in his 20s, explained, "The letters from Titan referred to a 'new offer,' but there was nothing new. We gave the garbage bags full of letters back to the company." The letters were presented to plant security guards marked "return to sender."

Earlier, Titan owner Taylor announced at a news conference that 200–300 jobs at the Des Moines plant would be eliminated and some production equipment moved to a new plant being built in Brownsville, Texas. In response, Local 164 called a solidarity rally June 27 at the union hall.

In a half-page ad placed in the *Des Moines Register* June 17, Local 164 explains that Taylor "isn't happy because he can't continue to force Titan Tire employees to work 26 days straight without a day off under miserable conditions....we'll stay on strike until he negotiates a fair labor agreement and stops his unfair labor practices."

Norway transit strikers reach tentative deal

After a four-week strike, nego-

at Coralville are \$9.37 an hour, \$4 less than at the Rockwell plant in nearby Cedar Rapids. Terms of the new agreement were not released to the media.

Unionists picket British Columbia TV station

BURNABY, British Columbia — Members of the Communication Energy and Paperworkers (CEP) Local 814-M set up picket lines here in front of television station BCTV on June 9. "People are upbeat and we're determined to win," explained striker Carole Nefedow, a tape librarian.

"We are technicians, newsroom people, librarians, production assistants, directors, graphic artists, and others, and we are united in a fight for a decent contract against BCTV, the most profitable TV station in Canada."

Around 125 strikers are full-time, 35 work part-time, and about 40 are "casuals" who are on call. Nefedow, who has been at BCTV for two years, works 37 and a half hours a week and is considered part-time. Part-timers get no benefits.

"We're getting support from Teamsters, hospital workers, other members of our union, Machinists, and others," reported striker Mike Davidson.

Transit workers in the Vancouver area, members of the Independent Canadian Transit Union, have received approval of their union to request a bus change if the vehicle to which they are assigned has ads for BCTV or Victoria affiliate

CHEK TV.

The British Columbia Federation of Labor has called for a boycott of BCTV and a ban of BCTV reporters from union press conferences. Workers at the *Vancouver Sun* and the *Province*, two Vancouver-area dailies organized by CEP Local 115, are refusing to handle advertisements from these TV stations.

The key issue in the strike is the union's opposition to a wage rollback for 50 newsroom workers, which would eliminate a gain-sharing plan that in the past has accounted for 10 percent of wages.

"Management is trying to punish the newsroom people for having recently joined the union and for fighting for their first collective agreement," explained Local 814-M president Duncan White.

He reported that the dispute includes "multiple-job functions," that is, allowing the employer to make top job assignments without regard for equal pay, job security, adequate severance packages, or upgrading part-timers to full time jobs.

Pete Clifford and Shellia Kennedy, members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union; Ray Parsons, a member of USWA Local 310 and Socialist Workers candidate for Iowa secretary of agriculture; Birgitta Isacson, member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden; and Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 764 in Vancouver contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Ray Plemmons, a longtime socialist

Raymond Plemmons, a former member of the Socialist Workers Party, died June 13 in Sacramento, California, of cancer. Ray was a longtime participant of the maritime union fraction in New York during the late 1940s and '50s. Because of his activities in the fraction and his ideas, he became a victim of the infamous witch hunt that also claimed a lot of victims in the maritime and elsewhere. In the early '60s Ray moved to California where he worked as a skilled steam fitter un-

til he retired. Ray was born in Idaho in June 1924. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Hazel, and his nephew Raymond Garza. Mike Garza Colusa, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Two million visit Tehran book fair

Pathfinder draws interest with books on Cuba, Marxism, and women's rights

BY TONY HUNT

TEHRAN, Iran — "Which is the best book about Che Guevara?" asked a student, one of hundreds of visitors, the majority of them young, to the Pathfinder Distribution stand at the 11th Tehran International Book Fair May 19-29. After talking to members of the international sales team staffing the stand, and consulting with her friends, the young woman made a list of several titles published or distributed by Pathfinder, including *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War 1956-58* and *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*. She also looked carefully at *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*, and added this title to her list. The student then went away to decide which books she could afford to buy through the book fair's central purchasing system.

Earlier a different group of women students had worked their way around the selection of revolutionary literature on the Pathfinder stand starting with titles by V.I. Lenin. Two of them decided to buy copies of *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*.

The London-based distributor was exhibiting in the foreign publishers section of the book fair for the seventh consecutive year. According to the organizers, the 11-day event attracted 2 million visitors this year, confirming its place as a major international cultural event. The organizers also reported that three times as many publishers from Arab countries exhibited at the fair this year, and representatives of the Saudi Arabian government attended the closing ceremony. This underlines the weakening of imperialist efforts to isolate Iran from countries in the region.

The annual book fair is one of the gains of the popular revolution of 1979, which swept away the brutal regime of the U.S.-backed monarch, the Shah, and wrenched the country and its resources out of imperialist control. Access to education and literature were among the central demands of the millions of workers and peasants who were the driving force of that revolution. One older visitor looking over the range of books by revolutionary leaders on the Pathfinder stand said, "These books would never have been allowed in the Shah's time."

Each year the Iranian government subsidizes the cost of foreign-language books that otherwise would be out of reach for working people and youth because of the unequal rate of exchange between oppressed countries such as Iran and imperialist countries. This year the subsidy was about 65 percent.

'What do you recommend this year?'

The Pathfinder sales team sold 408 books and pamphlets and one set of the *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* at the this year's book fair. Many of the book buyers were customers from previous years who were excited to see Pathfinder at the fair again. One asked, "I bought *New International* no. 7 last year. What do you recommend I read this year?" Also among the visitors to the Pathfinder stand were Islamic institutes, a military research department who bought several books on international politics, a governmental women's studies institute, and representatives of university libraries and departments. One student of German history took a catalogue and returned a few days later to say the library at his university was going to buy *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* by Leon Trotsky and other titles on fascism.

Interviews with two members of the Pathfinder sales team were shown on Iranian TV on consecutive nights during the book fair and apparently were later repeated. The official book fair newspaper, *Radio Tehran*, and an Iranian TV channel that broadcasts in Azerbaijani Turkish to Baku, capital of the former Soviet republic, also interviewed members of the Pathfinder team.

The bestselling title was *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick En-

gels. Eighteen copies were sold in English and three in Spanish. This reflected a growing interest in the basic ideas of Marxism, including among researchers for Islamic institutes looking for books to assist them in their studies of non-Islamic philosophies.

Interest in Marxist classics

Capital by Karl Marx sold out. Several people who wanted to buy the three-volume work were disappointed at missing out. "We need these books in Iran today" said one. One visitor to the stand, looking at the display of the *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, questioned, "Why is Pathfinder selling these books when they threw them away in the Soviet Union and when communism is dead?" A young man standing next to him replied, "Only now are we beginning to find out what communist ideas really mean — these ideas are just beginning to grow."

Issues of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder, also sold well in English, Spanish, and French. Issues no. 7 and no. 10, containing the lead articles "The Opening Guns of World War III" and "Imperialism's March to Fascism and War" were the third and fourth bestselling titles.

Book fair visitors, both men and women, bought 60 books from Pathfinder's range on the fight for women's rights. Seventeen copies of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen and Mary-Alice Waters were sold and was the second bestselling title. *Feminism and the Marxist Movement* by Mary-Alice Waters, which has recently been reprinted with an attractive new cover, and *Woman's Evolution* by Evelyn Reed both sold out. *Woman's Evolution*, which presents a materialist account of the origins of women's oppression, was on sale at the fair for the first time.

Eight copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* were sold in both English and Spanish editions. Many young people were interested in developments in the labor movement and social movements in other countries, especially in the United States, and checked out this title.

Books and pamphlets about the Cuban revolution were the other big sellers. Topping the list in this category were *At the Side of Che Guevara*, which contains two interviews with Cuban brigadier-general Harry Villegas, and *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*, a collection of articles first published in the *Militant* at the time of the 30th anniversary of Che Guevara's death in combat in Bolivia. One soldier visiting the stand said, "I'm looking for books on great

men," and selected titles by Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. Another visitor was full of questions about a fellow revolutionary country. "Why has Cuba been more successful than we have in becoming self-sufficient? What is the level of industrial development in Cuba? Who controls the factories?" A clergyman explained that he was buying books about the Cuban revolution because he wanted to understand why Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were getting such a hearing from young people.

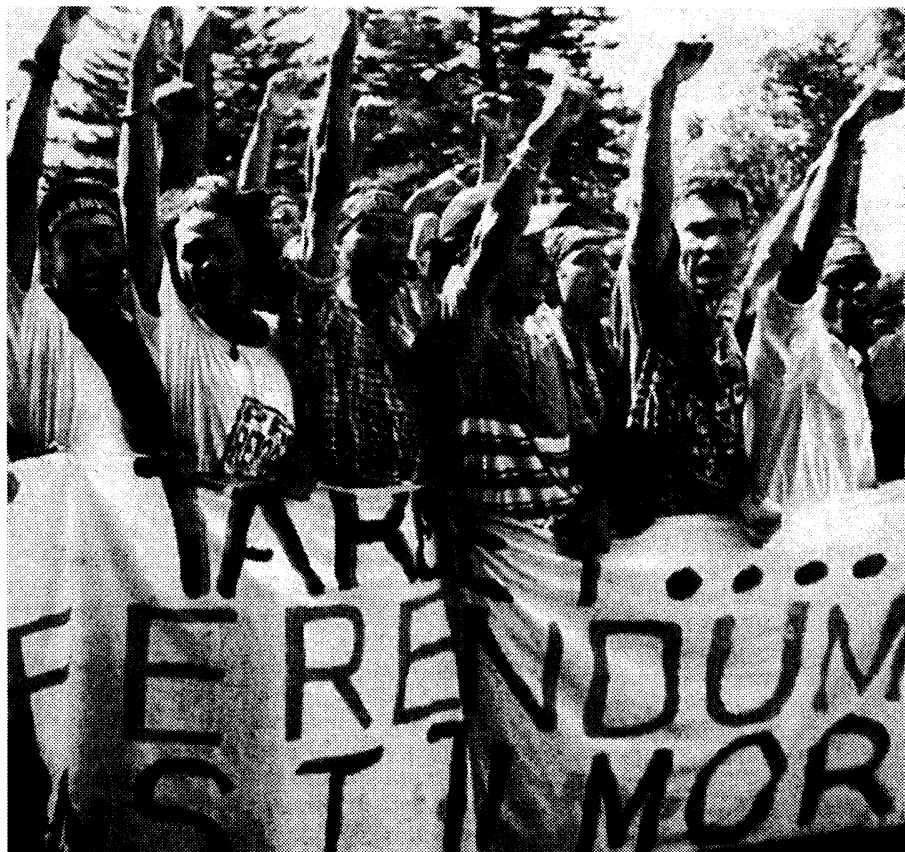
The great interest in culture in Iran was reflected in sales of *Art and Revolution*, a collection of articles by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky and *What is Surrealism?* by André Breton.

On the eve of the book fair, a Tehran based publisher released two Farsi-language editions of titles published or distributed by

Pathfinder. These were placed in the stands of other Iranian publishers in the Farsi section of the book fair and sold well. The Farsi edition of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara sold some 50 copies, while the lead article from *New International* no. 10, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes sold around 20 copies. A Farsi edition of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* and a new edition of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro are planned for release later this year.

The annual Tehran International Book Fair is not the only opportunity for sales of Pathfinder literature in Iran. In the course of 1997 Pathfinder stands at six regional book fairs around the country sold some 260 books worth around \$5,000.

'Independence for East Timor!'



Demanding self-determination for East Timor, some 200 students rallied June 17 at Justice Ministry in Jakarta, Indonesia. The same day in Dili, East Timor, a march of 3,000, the largest in recent years, protested the killing of 21-year-old Herman Soares by Indonesian soldiers. President B. J. Habibie said June 20 he would grant special status for East Timor and withdraw the Indonesian troops who have occupied it since 1975 if Indonesian sovereignty there was recognized internationally. He rejected students' demand for a referendum on independence.

Canada: striking meatpackers at Fletcher stay strong on picket line

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON
AND MAGGIE TROWE

RED DEER, Alberta — Seven weeks after responding to a lockout by going on strike, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1118 remain solid on the picket line outside the Fletcher's Fine Foods hog plant here.

The picket lines are up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Morale on the picket line continues to be high. But several workers expressed concerns about the impact of the replacement workers and are beginning to talk about the possibility of a long strike.

The lines swell to meet the strikebreakers as they cross in the morning and again in the afternoon as they leave. On June 5, five buses with cardboard covering their windows crossed the picket line of close to 200 angry strikers. The company claims they have around 200 replacement workers killing 2,000 hogs a day, down from more than

6,000 a day before the strike. Fletcher's applied for an injunction to restrict picketing, and on June 10 succeeded in getting an order limiting pickets to 50 immediately in front of the plant's main gate.

The main issue of the strike is the company's demand for a one-third cut in the workers' base rate. In the expired contract, new workers started at CAN\$8.00 (Can\$1=US\$0.68) an hour, and went up by \$0.50 increments every six months for four years until they reached the base rate of \$15.35 plus an \$0.08 hourly premium for every "bracket" that their job is rated. The company's proposal, which was rejected by a 98 percent vote, would raise the starting rate to \$10.55 but freeze the wage there and bring everybody's wage down to this level. A \$10,000 signing bonus was also offered.

The Fletcher's lockout follows the defeat of the four-month-long strike by UFCW members against Maple Leaf Foods last

winter, during which Maple Leaf closed its Edmonton, Alberta, hog plant. Maple Leaf wrested concessions from workers similar to those Fletcher's is now demanding.

Workers on the picket line expressed concern about the growing attack by the meatpacking bosses. "Let's reverse the domino effect and pick up the one domino that fell," said striker Dave Barrett.

Felipe Fuentes, 20, said "I'm fighting for the people who have been here 6 to 10 years. They have families. I'm not going to take Fletcher's bribe."

The strikers are also concerned about the company's plan to further speed up production. The company is expanding its kill floor operation and has raised production from 4,000 hogs a day to over 6,000 a day, with the goal of reaching 8,000 by the end of the year. Sergio Fuentes, Felipe's father, described the speedup going on. "When I

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